

# SENATE, No. 2457

## STATE OF NEW JERSEY 213th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JANUARY 13, 2009

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator JENNIFER BECK**

**District 12 (Mercer and Monmouth)**

**SYNOPSIS**

Prohibits public employers from reimbursing tuition or awarding promotions or compensation based on degrees or certifications obtained from unaccredited institutions.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



S2457 BECK

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1 AN ACT prohibiting public employers from reimbursing tuition or  
2 awarding promotions or compensation based on degrees or  
3 certifications obtained from unaccredited institutions and  
4 supplementing various parts of the statutory law.

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6 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State  
7 of New Jersey:

8  
9 1. At no time shall a board of education reimburse tuition costs  
10 or fees to an officer or employee attending an institution that is not  
11 a duly authorized institution of higher education or award  
12 promotions or additional compensation based on a degree or  
13 certification obtained from an institution that is not a duly  
14 authorized institution of higher education.

15 For the purposes of this section, duly authorized institution of  
16 higher education means an in-State institution licensed by the  
17 Commission on Higher Education or an out-of-State institution  
18 licensed by the appropriate state agency and regionally accredited  
19 or seeking accreditation by the appropriate accrediting body  
20 recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Education or the  
21 United States Department of Education.

22 Regarding institutions located outside of the United States or its  
23 possessions, a duly authorized institution of higher education means  
24 one that is recognized by the appropriate body in the particular  
25 country provided that the institution's requirements for awarding  
26 degrees are generally equivalent to those accepted in the United  
27 States by an accrediting body recognized by the United States  
28 Department of Education.

29 An officer or employee who knowingly and willfully accepts  
30 prohibited reimbursement, promotion or additional compensation  
31 shall be guilty of a disorderly persons offense and shall be subject  
32 to such disciplinary process or reimbursement as the employer shall  
33 provide.

34  
35 2. At no time shall a county or municipality or any board,  
36 commission, authority, or instrumentality thereof, reimburse tuition  
37 costs or fees to an officer or employee attending an institution that  
38 is not a duly authorized institution of higher education or award  
39 promotions or additional compensation based on a degree or  
40 certification obtained from an institution that is not a duly  
41 authorized institution of higher education.

42 For the purposes of this section, duly authorized institution of  
43 higher education means an in-State institution licensed by the  
44 Commission on Higher Education or an out-of-State institution  
45 licensed by the appropriate state agency and regionally accredited  
46 or seeking accreditation by the appropriate accrediting body  
47 recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Education or the  
48 United States Department of Education.

1       Regarding institutions located outside of the United States or its  
2 possessions, a duly authorized institution of higher education means  
3 one that is recognized by the appropriate body in the particular  
4 country provided that the institution's requirements for awarding  
5 degrees are generally equivalent to those accepted in the United  
6 States by an accrediting body recognized by the United States  
7 Department of Education.

8       An officer or employee who knowingly and willfully accepts  
9 prohibited reimbursement, promotion or additional compensation  
10 shall be guilty of a disorderly persons offense and shall be subject  
11 to such disciplinary process or reimbursement as the employer shall  
12 provide

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14       3. At no time shall the State or any board, commission,  
15 authority or instrumentality thereof, including an institution of  
16 higher education, reimburse tuition costs or fees to an officer or  
17 employee attending an institution that is not a duly authorized  
18 institution of higher education or award promotions or additional  
19 compensation based on a degree or certification obtained from an  
20 institution that is not a duly authorized institution of higher  
21 education.

22       For the purposes of this section, duly authorized institution of  
23 higher education means an in-State institution licensed by the  
24 Commission on Higher Education or an out-of-State institution  
25 licensed by the appropriate state agency and regionally accredited  
26 or seeking accreditation by the appropriate accrediting body  
27 recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Education or the  
28 United States Department of Education.

29       Regarding institutions located outside of the United States or its  
30 possessions, a duly authorized institution of higher education means  
31 one that is recognized by the appropriate body in the particular  
32 country provided that the institution's requirements for awarding  
33 degrees are generally equivalent to those accepted in the United  
34 States by an accrediting body recognized by the United States  
35 Department of Education.

36       An officer or employee who knowingly and willfully accepts  
37 prohibited reimbursement, promotion or additional compensation  
38 shall be guilty of a disorderly persons offense and shall be subject  
39 to such disciplinary process or reimbursement as the employer shall  
40 provide.

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42       4. This act shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

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47       This bill prohibits public employers from reimbursing tuition  
48 costs or fees or awarding promotions or compensation based on

**S2457 BECK**

1 degrees or certifications obtained from an institution that is not a  
2 duly authorized institution of higher education. A duly authorized  
3 institution of higher education means an in-State institution licensed  
4 by the Commission on Higher Education or an out-of-State  
5 institution licensed by the appropriate state agency and regionally  
6 accredited or seeking accreditation by the appropriate accrediting  
7 body recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Education or the  
8 United States Department of Education.

9       Regarding institutions located outside of the United States or its  
10 possessions, a duly authorized institution of higher education means  
11 one that is recognized by the appropriate body in the particular  
12 country provided that the institution's requirements for awarding  
13 degrees are generally equivalent to those accepted in the United  
14 States by an accrediting body recognized by the United States  
15 Department of Education.

16       This bill also makes it a disorderly persons offense for an officer  
17 or employee to knowingly and willfully accept prohibited  
18 reimbursement, promotion or additional compensation. The officer  
19 or employee will also be subject to such disciplinary process or  
20 reimbursement as the employer shall provide. A disorderly persons  
21 offense is punishable by up to six months in prison or a \$1,000 fine.

22       This bill is in response to recent news reports that some school  
23 districts have provided tuition assistance for coursework taken, and  
24 provided additional compensation upon the attainment of a degree  
25 completed, at an out-of-state institution of higher education that is  
26 not considered by the State of New Jersey to be a duly authorized  
27 institution.