

The Reverse Transfer Efficiency Act

A bipartisan proposal by Senators Mark R. Warner and Mike Braun

To facilitate the efficient review of student education records to increase postsecondary credential attainment.

The Problem:

The American Action Forum estimates that at the current production rate in higher education, our economy will face a shortage of 8.6 million workers with the necessary education and training by 2029. We need to take much-needed steps to increase the number of Americans with high quality degrees, certificates, and other postsecondary credentials in order to meet the demands of a 21st century economy. This goal cannot be reached without innovative ways of increasing degree completion. One such innovation is to provide the higher education community the ability to incorporate “reverse transfer” into its toolkit.

“Reverse transfer” refers to the transfer of credits from a four-year institution to a two-year institution that a student previously attended for the purpose of attaining an associate’s degree or certificate. Currently, students must proactively give permission for their institutions to determine whether they have earned enough credits to be awarded a degree or certificate—a bureaucratic step proven to diminish credential attainment rates.

The National Student Clearinghouse, an educational nonprofit that verifies enrollment data, has identified over four million individuals that have completed enough credit hours at a four-year institution to be eligible for an associate’s degree, but instead withdrew without a degree or certificate. Facilitating the practice of reverse transfer would ease students’ access to credentials they have already earned and better provide for the demands of the future economy.

The Bill:

The Reverse Transfer Efficiency Act would amend the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), to create a new exemption for the sharing of student education records between higher education institutions. The bill would allow an institution to share a student’s academic records with another institution that the student previously attended under the condition that the credit information is sent with the goal of conferring a degree and the student provides written consent prior to receiving any degree for which they are eligible.

Association Support:

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers, American Association of Community Colleges, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, Institute for Higher Education Policy, Student Veterans of America, Rocky Mountain Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers, Southern Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers, Texas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers, Indiana Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers, Missouri Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers, Kansas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers, Middle States Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers, Nebraska Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers, Alabama Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, Chesapeake and Potomac Association of College Registrar and Admission Officers.

Higher Education System Support:

Arkansas Department of Higher Education, The City University of New York, Colorado Department of Higher Education, Colorado Community College System, Des Moines Area Community College, Indiana Commission for Higher Education, Ivy Tech Community College, Maricopa County Community College District, North Carolina Community College System, North Carolina Association of Community College Presidents, Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, Oregon Community College Association, Salt Lake Community College, The State of Tennessee Higher Education Commission, The State University of New York System, The Tennessee Board of Regents, The University of Colorado - All Campuses, The University System of Georgia, The University of Tennessee System, The University of Texas System, Virginia Community College System, Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission, The West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education.

If you have any questions, please contact Hayley Brower in Senator Warner’s office at [Hayley Brower@warner.senate.gov](mailto:HayleyBrower@warner.senate.gov) or (202) 224-2023 or Katie Bailey in Senator Braun’s office at [Katie Bailey@braun.senate.gov](mailto:Katie_Bailey@braun.senate.gov) or (202) 224-3643.