

HB 2124 with HCA 1 and HCA 2 -- SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND MATHEMATICS

SPONSOR: Butler

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with Amendments" by the Standing Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education by a vote of 8 to 4.

The bill authorizes any taxpayer who hires a student majoring in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics at a Missouri public or private two-year or four-year college to fill an internship position in one of those fields for at least 15 hours a week for at least 12 weeks to apply to have up to \$5,000 of the taxpayer's state tax liability removed from the General Revenue Fund and placed in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Fund. The Department of Higher Education must establish a procedure for approving applications, and the total amount of tax transferred annually cannot exceed \$50,000 for all participating taxpayers. Any donations to the fund from third parties will not count toward the \$50,000 limit.

The bill establishes the Economic-Education Partnership Act. An employer with facilities in Missouri that provides educational benefits to a qualified individual or trains a qualified individual for an employment position in one of the specified fields, can apply to have up to \$5,000 of the taxpayer's state tax liability transferred from the General Revenue Fund and placed in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Fund. Training must be in the health care, engineering, or information technology fields for no more than one year. "Education benefits" are defined as the funds provided by an employer to a qualified individual or to an accredited educational institution for a period of up to five years to pay any portion of the tuition or fees for an employee who is a resident of Missouri to pursue an advanced certificate or an associates, bachelors, masters, or doctorate degree in health care, engineering, or information technology related programs. The department must establish a procedure for approving applications, and the total amount of tax transferred annually cannot exceed \$50,000 for all participating taxpayers. The department may audit employers to ensure compliance with these provisions.

This bill is the same as HB 1640 (2016) and SB 268 (2015).

HCA #1: This amendment changes the definition of "qualified individual" to require he/she to be a citizen or permanent resident of the United States.

HCA #2: This amendment makes a technical correction by removing

references to Chapter 147, RSMo, and changing the word "removed" to "transferred."

PROPONENTS: Supporters say this bill will help to increase STEM opportunities for students and make it easier to enter the workforce. It will also help to provide more opportunities for gifted students.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Butler; Missouri Education Reform Council; and Gifted Association Of Missouri.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.