HOUSE BILL NO. 4456

April 16, 2019, Introduced by Reps. Frederick, Anthony, VanSingel, Kennedy, Calley, Tate, Shannon and Markkanen and referred to the Committee on Appropriations.

A bill to establish a financial aid program for certain residents of this state seeking associate degrees or industry-recognized certificates or credentials from certain educational and jobs training programs; to provide for the administration of the financial aid program; and to prescribe certain powers and duties of certain state officers, agencies, and departments.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF MICHIGAN ENACT:

1 Sec. 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Michigan reconnect grant act".
Sec. 2. As used in this act:

(a) "Continuous enrollment" means enrollment in at least 2 semesters or the equivalent in terms or quarters, as determined by the department, during each academic year for a number of consecutive academic years.

(b) "Department" means the department of talent and economic development.

(c) "Eligible institution" means an entity described in subparagraph (i) and (ii) that meets the condition described in subparagraph (iii), as follows:

(i) Is an accredited degree- or certificate-granting public community college in this state.

(ii) Is a provider of an educational component of a registered apprenticeship program or other jobs training program leading to an industry-recognized certificate or credential if the provider is an accredited degree- or certificate-granting public community college in this state and is charging tuition and mandatory fees to the apprentice or trainee.

(iii) Complies with applicable restraints on fee and tuition rate increases, if any, provided for in article II of the school aid act of 1979, 1979 PA 94, MCL 388.1801 to 388.1830.

(d) "Gift aid" means scholarships or grants from sources that do not require repayment. The term does not include student loans, work-study awards, or qualified withdrawals made from education savings accounts to pay higher education expenses pursuant to the Michigan education savings program act, 2000 PA 161, MCL 390.1471 to 390.1486.

(e) "Half-time student" means a student enrolled in at least 6 credit hours in an academic semester or the equivalent number of
credit hours in a term or quarter, as determined by the department.

(f) "Michigan reconnect grant student" means a student
admitted to and enrolled in an eligible institution and receiving a
Michigan reconnect grant under this act.

Sec. 3. The department shall administer the Michigan reconnect
grant program for residents of this state seeking associate degrees
or industry-recognized certificates or credentials from eligible
institutions, subject to all of the following:

(a) To be eligible for the grant, an individual must meet all
of the following conditions by the date of his or her enrollment
described in subparagraph (iv):

(i) Be at least 25 years old.

(ii) Be a resident of this state for at least the immediately
preceding year.

(iii) Have graduated from high school with a diploma or
certificate of completion or achieved a high school equivalency
certificate. As used in this subparagraph, "high school equivalency
certificate" means that term as defined in section 4 of the school

(iv) Be admitted to, and enrolled as at least a half-time
student in, a program at an eligible institution leading to an
associate degree or industry-recognized certificate or credential.

(v) Not have previously earned an associate or baccalaureate
degree.

(b) Students applying for the grant must complete a Michigan
reconnect grant application for their initial year of enrollment in
accordance with a schedule determined by the department. Students
must also complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid
each academic year in which they seek to receive the Michigan
(c) To continue to receive a Michigan reconnect grant at an eligible institution, a student must do all of the following:

(i) Except as otherwise provided in subdivision (e), maintain continuous enrollment as at least a half-time student in a program at an eligible institution leading to an associate degree or industry-recognized certificate or credential.

(ii) Maintain satisfactory academic standing as determined by the eligible institution and department rules.

(iii) Participate in relevant academic and career advising programs offered by the eligible institution and the department.

(d) The amount of a Michigan reconnect grant award is equal to the cost of tuition and mandatory fees at the eligible institution attended less all other gift aid. Gift aid shall be credited first to the student's tuition and mandatory fees. If awarded, Michigan reconnect grant money shall be paid to the eligible institution for credit to the student's account.

(e) A Michigan reconnect grant student who takes a leave of absence from an eligible institution due to a medical or family hardship may, subject to department approval, continue to receive the grant upon resuming the student's education at an eligible institution if the student continues to meet all applicable eligibility requirements. A leave of absence under this subdivision does not disrupt the requirement of continuous enrollment under subdivision (c)(i) and does not count toward the 4-year limitation described in subdivision (f)(i).

(f) A student is eligible for a Michigan reconnect grant until the occurrence of either of the following:

(i) Subject to subdivision (e), 4 years have passed since the
student became a Michigan reconnect grant student.

(ii) The student has earned an associate degree. For purposes of this subparagraph, a student who has earned a certificate or credential at an eligible institution remains eligible for the Michigan reconnect grant if he or she has not yet earned an associate degree and the completion of the certificate or credential directly leads to an associate degree program.

(g) A student who participates in the Michigan reconnect grant program may transfer from 1 eligible institution to another eligible institution without loss of the grant so long as the student continues to meet all eligibility requirements for the grant.

Sec. 4. The department shall promulgate rules to implement this act pursuant to the administrative procedures act of 1969, 1969 PA 306, MCL 24.201 to 24.328.

Enacting section 1. It is the intent of the legislature that money in the talent investment fund created in section 8a of the higher education loan authority act, 1975 PA 222, MCL 390.1158a, shall be expended, upon appropriation, for the purpose of funding the Michigan reconnect grant program established in the Michigan reconnect grant act, in accordance with section 8a of the higher education loan authority act, 1975 PA 222, MCL 390.1158a, which states that money in the talent investment fund, upon appropriation, shall be expended "for the purpose of enhancing the economic talent of Michigan residents, increasing access to academic and technical credentials or certifications, improving educational opportunities, or other purposes as provided by law".