

Senate Bill 75

By: Senators Meyer von Bremen of the 12th, Williams of the 19th, Stoner of the 6th and Golden of the 8th

AS PASSED SENATE

**A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT**

1 To amend Code Section 20-2-157 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the
2 uniform reporting system for certain purposes, so as to provide for weighting of grades for
3 honors, advanced placement, and international baccalaureate courses for purposes of
4 determining eligibility for postsecondary scholarships, grants, and loans; to provide for the
5 establishment of minimum state-wide standards for honors courses; to provide for legislative
6 findings; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

7 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:**

8 **SECTION 1.**

9 The General Assembly finds that:

- 10 (1) The State of Georgia has a compelling interest in the capabilities and intellectual
11 development of its high school students across the state;
- 12 (2) The General Assembly has repeatedly demonstrated its commitment to secondary and
13 higher education in the State of Georgia, as particularly evidenced in both the longevity
14 of the HOPE scholarship program and in the development of one of the finest university
15 systems in this country;
- 16 (3) In order to sustain this level of commitment to education, it is of paramount
17 importance to strengthen the intellect of high school students in Georgia and to encourage
18 them to take the most demanding courses possible to challenge their academic abilities;
- 19 (4) A study should be conducted to determine whether disparity exists in the levels of
20 rigor in honors classes across this state and to ensure parity throughout this state;
- 21 (5) In the interim, the laws of this state should in no way dissuade the interests of
22 students in taking such rigorous academic courses out of fear that doing so would
23 jeopardize academic ranking for their ability to obtain a HOPE scholarship; and
- 24 (6) In order to encourage students to challenge themselves to the best of their abilities,
25 grades in those high school classes throughout this state with an accelerated workload
26 should be augmented for the purposes of HOPE scholarship eligibility. Otherwise, the

1 effect of the weighting of grades for coursework that is classified as advanced placement
2 or international baccalaureate under Code Section 20-2-157 may discourage students
3 from taking rigorous academic classes.

4 **SECTION 2.**

5 Code Section 20-2-157 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the uniform
6 reporting system for certain purposes, is amended by revising subsection (b) as follows:

7 "(b) Beginning May 1, 2007, each school system and private school shall adopt the
8 reporting system described in this subsection for purposes of identifying and qualifying
9 graduating seniors for the HOPE scholarship program and other programs identified in this
10 Code section:

11 (1) Each school system and private school shall transmit, in a manner and at times
12 prescribed by the Georgia Student Finance Commission, an electronic transcript of
13 courses and course grades for each graduating senior that reflects the complete high
14 school academic record of the student, including scores on any state tests required for
15 graduation, the grading scales used by the school system or private school for the time
16 periods referenced by the transcripts, and any other pertinent information as determined
17 by the Georgia Student Finance Commission. Each grade reported by a school system
18 or private school to the commission for the purpose of calculating the grade point average
19 for HOPE scholarship eligibility shall be the actual grade earned by the student, with no
20 weighting or addition of points by the local school system or private school;

21 (2) The Georgia Student Finance Commission shall calculate a grade point average for
22 the purpose of determining eligibility for the HOPE scholarship from these electronic
23 transcripts and shall notify students of their eligibility and high schools as to the
24 eligibility of students;

25 (3) For students otherwise qualified and enrolling as freshmen students in eligible public
26 or private postsecondary institutions for the first time on May 1, 2007, or thereafter, the
27 Georgia Student Finance Commission shall calculate grade point averages for
28 determining eligibility for the HOPE scholarship and other scholarships referenced in this
29 Code section as follows:

30 (A) For students receiving a college preparatory diploma, each grade for a student in
31 attempted coursework in English, mathematics, science, social studies, and foreign
32 language that would, if successfully completed, satisfy a core graduation requirement
33 for the college preparatory curriculum shall be equated to a grade on a 4.0 scale, such
34 that a grade of 'A' = 4.0, a grade of 'B' = 3.0, a grade of 'C' = 2.0, a grade of 'D' = 1.0,
35 and a grade of 'F' = 0; or

1 (B) For students receiving a career/technical diploma, each grade for a student in
 2 attempted coursework in English, mathematics, science, and social studies that would,
 3 if successfully completed, satisfy a core graduation requirement for the career/technical
 4 curriculum shall be equated to a grade on a 4.0 scale, such that a grade of 'A' = 4.0, a
 5 grade of 'B' = 3.0, a grade of 'C' = 2.0, a grade of 'D' = 1.0, and a grade of 'F' = 0.

6 Grades for coursework that is classified as honors, advanced placement, or international
 7 baccalaureate shall be weighted by the Georgia Student Finance Commission in
 8 calculating the overall grade point averages for students, ~~provided that the weighting of~~
 9 ~~such course grades is uniformly applied to all students in the state taking the specified~~
 10 ~~coursework~~ by adding 0.5 to the grade received by the student in such course, except for
 11 a failing grade, such that a grade of 'A' = 4.5, a grade of 'B' = 3.5, a grade of 'C' = 2.5, a
 12 grade of 'D' = 1.5, and a grade of 'F' = 0. The sum of the equated grades shall be divided
 13 by the number of course grades, adjusted for term length, to yield a grade point average
 14 on a 4.0 scale. No later than December 31, 2009, the State Board of Education shall
 15 establish minimum state-wide standards for honors courses;

16 (4) Qualification for the HOPE scholarship shall be determined from the grade point
 17 average calculated as set out in paragraph (3) of this subsection. Beginning May 1, 2007,
 18 students with grade point averages equal to or in excess of 3.0 on the 4.0 scale with a
 19 college preparatory diploma shall meet achievement standards for the HOPE scholarship;
 20 students receiving a career/technical diploma shall meet achievement standards for the
 21 HOPE scholarship with a grade point average equal to or in excess of 3.2 on a 4.0 scale.
 22 This paragraph shall apply regardless of when a student graduated from high school and
 23 regardless of such student's eligibility status prior to May 1, 2007; and

24 (5) Beginning May 1, 2007, only the reporting system as indicated in this subsection
 25 shall be used to determine eligibility for all grants, scholarships, or loans to attend
 26 colleges or universities which are administered pursuant to Article 7 of Chapter 3 of this
 27 title and eligibility for enrollment in postsecondary courses pursuant to Code Section
 28 20-2-161.1."

29 SECTION 3.

30 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.