

House Bill 439 (COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE)

By: Representatives O`Neal of the 146th and Stephens of the 164th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Article 2 of Chapter 7 of Title 48 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,
2 relating to imposition, rate, computation, and exemptions regarding income taxes, so as to
3 provide for the comprehensive revision of income tax credits for business enterprises in less
4 developed areas, employers providing approved retraining, business enterprises having
5 qualified research expenses, base year port traffic, and taxpayers establishing or relocating
6 headquarters into this state; to provide for procedures, conditions, and limitations; to provide
7 an effective date; to provide for applicability; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other
8 purposes.

9 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

10 style="text-align:center">**SECTION 1.**

11 Article 2 of Chapter 7 of Title 48 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
12 imposition, rate, computation, and exemptions regarding income taxes, is amended by
13 revising Code Section 48-7-40, relating to tax credits for business enterprises in less
14 developed areas, to read as follows:

15 "48-7-40.

16 (a) As used in this Code section, the term:

17 (1) 'Broadcasting' means the transmission or licensing of audio, video, text, or other
18 programming content to the general public, subscribers, or to third parties via radio,
19 television, cable, satellite, or the Internet or Internet Protocol and includes motion picture
20 and sound recording, editing, production, postproduction, and distribution. 'Broadcasting'
21 is limited to establishments classified under the 2007 North American Industry
22 Classification System Codes 515, broadcasting; ~~516~~ 519, Internet publishing and
23 broadcasting; 517, telecommunications; and 512, motion picture and sound recording
24 industries.

25 (2) 'Business enterprise' means any business or the headquarters of any such business
26 which is engaged in manufacturing, warehousing and distribution, processing,

27 telecommunications, broadcasting, tourism, and research and development industries.

28 Such term shall not include retail businesses.

29 (3) 'Competitive project' means expansion or location of some or all of a business
 30 enterprise's operations in this state having significant regional impact where the
 31 commissioner of economic development certifies that but for some or all of the tax
 32 incentives provided in this Code section, the business enterprise would have located or
 33 expanded outside this state.

34 ~~(3)~~(4) 'Existing business enterprise' means any business or the headquarters of any such
 35 business which has operated for the immediately preceding three years a facility in this
 36 state which is engaged in manufacturing, warehousing and distribution, processing,
 37 telecommunications, broadcasting, tourism, or research and development industries.
 38 Such term shall not include retail businesses.

39 (b)(1) Not later than December 31 of each year, using the most current data available
 40 from the Department of Labor and the United States Department of Commerce, the
 41 commissioner of community affairs shall rank and designate as less developed areas all
 42 159 counties in this state using a combination of the following equally weighted factors:

- 43 (A) Highest unemployment rate for the most recent 36 month period;
- 44 (B) Lowest per capita income for the most recent 36 month period; and
- 45 (C) Highest percentage of residents whose incomes are below the poverty level
 46 according to the most recent data available.

47 (2) Counties ranked and designated as the first through seventy-first least developed
 48 counties shall be classified as tier 1, counties ranked and designated as the
 49 seventy-second through one hundred sixth least developed counties shall be classified as
 50 tier 2, counties ranked and designated as the one hundred seventh through one hundred
 51 forty-first least developed counties shall be classified as tier 3, and counties ranked and
 52 designated as the one hundred forty-second through one hundred fifty-ninth least
 53 developed counties shall be classified as tier 4.

54 (c) The commissioner of community affairs shall be authorized to include in the tier 2
 55 designation provided for in subsection (b) of this Code section any tier 3 county which, in
 56 the opinion of the commissioner of community affairs, undergoes a sudden and severe
 57 period of economic distress caused by the closing of one or more business enterprises
 58 located in such county. No designation made pursuant to this subsection shall operate to
 59 displace or remove any other county previously designated as a tier 2 county.

60 (c.1) The commissioner of community affairs shall be authorized to include in the tier 1
 61 designation provided for in subsection (b) of this Code section any tier 2 county which, in
 62 the opinion of the commissioner of community affairs, undergoes a sudden and severe
 63 period of economic distress caused by the closing of one or more business enterprises

64 located in such county. No designation made pursuant to this subsection shall operate to
65 displace or remove any other county previously designated as a tier 1 county.

66 (d) For business enterprises which plan a significant expansion in their labor forces, the
67 commissioner of community affairs shall prescribe redesignation procedures to ensure that
68 the business enterprises can claim credits in future years without regard to whether or not
69 a particular county is reclassified in a different tier.

70 (e)(1) Business enterprises in counties designated by the commissioner of community
71 affairs as tier 1 counties shall be allowed a tax credit for taxes imposed under this article
72 equal to \$3,500.00 annually per eligible new full-time employee job for five years
73 beginning with ~~years two through six after the creation of such job~~ the first taxable year
74 in which the new full-time employee job is created and for the four immediately
75 succeeding taxable years; provided, however, that where the amount of such credit
76 exceeds a business enterprise's liability for such taxes in a taxable year, the excess may
77 be taken as a credit against such business enterprise's quarterly or monthly payment under
78 Code Section 48-7-103 but not to exceed in any one taxable year \$3,500.00 for each new
79 full-time employee job when aggregated with the credit applied against taxes under this
80 article. Each employee whose employer receives credit against such business enterprise's
81 quarterly or monthly payment under Code Section 48-7-103 shall receive credit against
82 his or her income tax liability under Code Section 48-7-20 for the corresponding taxable
83 year for the full amount which would be credited against such liability prior to the
84 application of the credit provided for in this paragraph. Credits against quarterly or
85 monthly payments under Code Section 48-7-103 and credits against liability under Code
86 Section 48-7-20 established by this paragraph shall not constitute income to the taxpayer.
87 Business enterprises in counties designated by the commissioner of community affairs
88 as tier 2 counties shall be allowed a job tax credit for taxes imposed under this article
89 equal to \$2,500.00 annually, business enterprises in counties designated by the
90 commissioner of community affairs as tier 3 counties shall be allowed a job tax credit for
91 taxes imposed under this article equal to \$1,250.00 annually, and business enterprises in
92 counties designated by the commissioner of community affairs as tier 4 counties shall be
93 allowed a job tax credit for taxes imposed under this article equal to \$750.00 annually for
94 each new full-time employee job for five years beginning with ~~years two through six after~~
95 ~~the creation of the job~~ the first taxable year in which the new full-time employee job is
96 created and for the four immediately succeeding taxable years. Where a business
97 enterprise is engaged in a competitive project located in a county designated by the
98 commissioner of community affairs as a tier 2 county and where the amount of the credit
99 provided in this paragraph exceeds such business enterprise's liability for taxes imposed
100 under this article in a taxable year, or where a business enterprise is engaged in a

101 competitive project located in a county designated by the commissioner of community
102 affairs as a tier 3 or tier 4 county and where the amount of the credit provided in this
103 paragraph exceeds 50 percent of such business enterprise's liability for taxes imposed
104 under this article in a taxable year, the excess may be taken as a credit against such
105 business enterprise's quarterly or monthly payment under Code Section 48-7-103 but not
106 to exceed in any one taxable year \$2,500.00 for each new full-time employee job when
107 aggregated with the credit applied against taxes under this article. Each employee whose
108 employer receives credit against such business enterprise's quarterly or monthly payment
109 under Code Section 48-7-103 shall receive credit against his or her income tax liability
110 under Code Section 48-7-20 for the corresponding taxable year for the full amount which
111 would be credited against such liability prior to the application of the credit provided for
112 in this paragraph. Credits against quarterly or monthly payments under Code Section 48-
113 7-103 and credits against liability under Code Section 48-7-20 established by this
114 paragraph shall not constitute income to the taxpayer. The number of new full-time jobs
115 shall be determined by comparing the monthly average number of full-time employees
116 subject to Georgia income tax withholding for the taxable year with the corresponding
117 period of the prior taxable year. In tier 1 counties, those business enterprises that increase
118 employment by five or more shall be eligible for the credit. In tier 2 counties, only those
119 business enterprises that increase employment by ten or more shall be eligible for the
120 credit. In tier 3 counties, only those business enterprises that increase employment by 15
121 or more shall be eligible for the credit. In tier 4 counties, only those business enterprises
122 that increase employment by 25 or more shall be eligible for the credit. The average
123 wage of the new jobs created must be above the average wage of the county that has the
124 lowest average wage of any county in the state to qualify as reported in the most recently
125 available annual issue of the Georgia Employment and Wages Averages Report of the
126 Department of Labor. To qualify for a credit under this paragraph, the employer must
127 make health insurance coverage available to the employee filling the new full-time job;
128 provided, however, that nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to require the
129 employer to pay for all or any part of health insurance coverage for such an employee in
130 order to claim the credit provided for in this paragraph if such employer does not pay for
131 all or any part of health insurance coverage for other employees. Credit shall not be
132 allowed during a year if the net employment increase falls below the number required in
133 such tier. ~~Any credit received for years prior to the year in which the net employment~~
134 ~~increase falls below the number required in such tier shall not be affected.~~ In any year
135 in which the net employment increase falls below the number required in such tier, the
136 taxpayer shall forfeit the right to the credit claimed for that taxable year. For the year that
137 the net employment increase falls below the number required in such tier, a taxpayer that

138 forfeits such right is therefore liable for all past taxes imposed by this article for that
139 taxable year and all past payments under Code Section 48-7-103 for that taxable year that
140 were foregone by the state as a result of the credits provided by this Code section;
141 provided, however, that Code Section 48-2-40 shall not apply to any such forfeiture. The
142 state revenue commissioner shall adjust the credit allowed each year for net new
143 employment fluctuations above the minimum level of the number required in such tier.
144 (2) Existing business enterprises shall be allowed an additional tax credit for taxes
145 imposed under this article equal to \$500.00 per eligible new full-time employee job ~~for~~
146 ~~one year after the creation of such job~~ the first year in which the new full-time employee
147 job is created. The additional credit shall be claimed in ~~year two after the creation of~~
148 ~~such job~~ the first taxable year in which the new full-time employee job is created. The
149 number of new full-time jobs shall be determined by comparing the monthly average
150 number of full-time employees subject to Georgia income tax withholding for the taxable
151 year with the corresponding period of the prior taxable year. In tier 1 counties, those
152 existing business enterprises that increase employment by five or more shall be eligible
153 for the credit. In tier 2 counties, only those existing business enterprises that increase
154 employment by ten or more shall be eligible for the credit. In tier 3 counties, only those
155 existing business enterprises that increase employment by 15 or more shall be eligible for
156 the credit. In tier 4 counties, only those existing business enterprises that increase
157 employment by 25 or more shall be eligible for the credit. The average wage of the new
158 jobs created must be above the average wage of the county that has the lowest average
159 wage of any county in the state to qualify as reported in the most recently available
160 annual issue of the Georgia Employment and Wages Averages Report of the Department
161 of Labor. To qualify for a credit under this paragraph, the employer must make health
162 insurance coverage available to the employee filling the new full-time job; provided,
163 however, that nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to require the employer to pay
164 for all or any part of health insurance coverage for such an employee in order to claim the
165 credit provided for in this paragraph if such employer does not pay for all or any part of
166 health insurance coverage for other employees. Credit shall not be allowed during a year
167 if the net employment increase falls below the number required in such tier. Any credit
168 ~~received~~ generated and utilized for years prior to the year in which the net employment
169 increase falls below the number required in such tier shall not be affected. The state
170 revenue commissioner shall adjust the credit allowed each year for net new employment
171 fluctuations above the minimum level of the number required in such tier. This
172 paragraph shall apply only to new eligible full-time jobs created in taxable years
173 beginning on or after January 1, 2006, and ending no later than taxable years beginning
174 prior to January 1, 2011.

175 (f) Tax credits for ~~five~~ four years for the taxes imposed under this article shall be awarded
 176 for additional new full-time jobs created by business enterprises qualified under subsection
 177 (b), (c), or (c.1) of this Code section. Additional new full-time jobs shall be determined by
 178 subtracting the highest total employment of the business enterprise during years two
 179 through ~~six~~ five, or whatever portion of years two through ~~six~~ five which has been
 180 completed, from the total increased employment. The state revenue commissioner shall
 181 adjust the credit allowed in the event of employment fluctuations during the ~~additional~~ five
 182 years of credit.

183 (g) The sale, merger, acquisition, or bankruptcy of any business enterprise shall not create
 184 new eligibility in any succeeding business entity, but any unused job tax credit may be
 185 transferred and continued by any transferee of the business enterprise. The commissioner
 186 of community affairs shall determine whether or not qualifying net increases or decreases
 187 have occurred and may require reports, promulgate regulations, and hold hearings as
 188 needed for substantiation and qualification.

189 (h)(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection, any credit claimed under
 190 this Code section but not used in any taxable year may be carried forward for ten years
 191 from the close of the taxable year in which the qualified jobs were established, subject
 192 to forfeiture as provided in paragraph (1) of subsection (e) of this Code section, but in
 193 tiers 3 and 4 the credit established by this Code section taken in any one taxable year
 194 shall be limited to an amount not greater than 50 percent of the taxpayer's state income
 195 tax liability which is attributable to income derived from operations in this state for that
 196 taxable year. In tier 1 and 2 counties, the credit allowed under this Code section against
 197 taxes imposed under this article in any taxable year shall be limited to an amount not
 198 greater than 100 percent of the taxpayer's state income tax liability attributable to income
 199 derived from operations in this state for such taxable year.

200 (2) The additional credit claimed by an existing business enterprise pursuant to the
 201 provisions of paragraph (2) of subsection (e) of this Code section must be applied against
 202 taxes imposed for the taxable year in which such credit is available and may not be
 203 carried forward to any subsequent taxable year.

204 (i) Notwithstanding any provision of this Code section to the contrary, in counties
 205 recognized and designated as the first through fortieth least developed counties in the tier
 206 1 designation, job tax credits shall be allowed as provided in this Code section, in addition
 207 to business enterprises or existing business enterprises, to any business of any nature.

208 (j) Notwithstanding Code Section 48-2-35, any tax credit claimed under this Code section
 209 shall be claimed within one year of the earlier of the date the original tax return was filed
 210 or the date such return was due as prescribed in subsection (a) of Code Section 48-7-56,
 211 including any approved extensions.

212 ~~(j)~~(k) The commissioner may require such reports, promulgate such regulations, and gather
 213 such relevant data necessary and advisable for the evaluation of the job tax credits
 214 established by this Code section.

215 (l) Taxpayers that initially claimed the credit under this Code section for any taxable year
 216 beginning before January 1, 2009, shall be governed, for purposes of all such credits
 217 claimed as well as any credits claimed in subsequent taxable years related to such initial
 218 claim, by this Code section as it was in effect for the taxable year in which the taxpayer
 219 made such initial claim."

220 SECTION 2.

221 Said article is further amended by revising Code Section 48-7-40.1, relating to tax credits for
 222 business enterprises in less developed areas, to read as follows:

223 "48-7-40.1.

224 (a) As used in this Code section, the term:

225 (1) 'Broadcasting' means the transmission or licensing of audio, video, text, or other
 226 programming content to the general public, subscribers, or to third parties via radio,
 227 television, cable, satellite, or the Internet or Internet Protocol and includes motion picture
 228 and sound recording, editing, production, postproduction, and distribution. 'Broadcasting'
 229 is limited to establishments classified under the 2007 North American Industry
 230 Classification System Codes 515, broadcasting; ~~516~~ 519, Internet publishing and
 231 broadcasting; 517, telecommunications; and 512, motion picture and sound recording
 232 industries.

233 (2) 'Business enterprise' means any business or the headquarters of any such business
 234 which is engaged in manufacturing, warehousing and distribution, processing,
 235 telecommunications, broadcasting, tourism, and research and development industries.
 236 Such term shall not include retail businesses.

237 (b) Not later than December 31 of each year, using the most current data available from
 238 the Department of Labor and the United States Department of Commerce, the
 239 commissioner of community affairs shall rank and designate as less developed areas the
 240 areas which are comprised of ten or more contiguous census tracts in this state using a
 241 combination of the following equally weighted factors:

- 242 (1) Highest unemployment rate for the most recent 36 month period;
- 243 (2) Lowest per capita income for the most recent 36 month period; and
- 244 (3) Highest percentage of residents whose income is below the poverty level according
 245 to the most recent data available.

246 (c) The commissioner of community affairs also shall be authorized to include in the
 247 designation provided for in subsection (b) of this Code section:

248 (1) Any area comprised of ten or more contiguous census tracts which, in the opinion of
 249 the commissioner of community affairs, undergoes a sudden and severe period of
 250 economic distress caused by the closing of one or more business enterprises located in
 251 such area;

252 (2) Any area comprised of one or more census tracts adjacent to a federal military
 253 installation where pervasive poverty is evidenced by a 15 percent poverty rate or greater
 254 as reflected in the most recent decennial census;

255 (3) Any area comprised of one or more contiguous census tracts which, in the opinion
 256 of the commissioner of community affairs, is or will be adversely impacted by the loss
 257 of one or more jobs, businesses, or residences as a result of an airport expansion,
 258 including noise buy-outs, or the closing of a business enterprise which, in the opinion of
 259 the commissioner of community affairs, results or will result in a sudden and severe
 260 period of economic distress; or

261 (4) Any area which is within or adjacent to one or more contiguous census block groups
 262 with a poverty rate of 15 percent or greater as determined from data in the most current
 263 United States decennial census, where the area is also included within a state enterprise
 264 zone pursuant to Chapter 88 of Title 36 or where a redevelopment plan has been adopted
 265 pursuant to Chapter 61 of Title 36 and which, in the opinion of the commissioner of
 266 community affairs, displays pervasive poverty, underdevelopment, general distress, and
 267 blight.

268 No designation made pursuant to this subsection shall operate to displace or remove any
 269 other area previously designated as a less developed area. Notwithstanding any provision
 270 of this Code section to the contrary, in areas designated as suffering from pervasive poverty
 271 under this subsection, job tax credits shall be allowed as provided in this Code section, in
 272 addition to business enterprises, to any lawful business.

273 (d) For business enterprises which plan a significant expansion in their labor forces, the
 274 commissioner of community affairs shall prescribe redesignation procedures to ensure that
 275 the business enterprises can claim credits in future years without regard to whether or not
 276 a particular area is removed from the list of less developed areas.

277 (e) Business enterprises in areas designated by the commissioner of community affairs as
 278 less developed areas shall be allowed a job tax credit for taxes imposed under this article
 279 equal to \$3,500.00 annually per eligible new full-time employee job for five years
 280 beginning with ~~years two through six after the creation of such job~~ the first taxable year in
 281 which the new full-time employee job is created and for the four immediately succeeding
 282 taxable years; provided, however, that where the amount of such credit exceeds a business
 283 enterprise's liability for such taxes in a taxable year, the excess may be taken as a credit
 284 against such business enterprise's quarterly or monthly payment under Code Section

285 48-7-103 but not to exceed in any one taxable year \$3,500.00 for each new full-time
286 employee job when aggregated with the credit applied against taxes under this article.
287 Each employee whose employer receives credit against such business enterprise's quarterly
288 or monthly payment under Code Section 48-7-103 shall receive credit against his or her
289 income tax liability under Code Section 48-7-20 for the corresponding taxable year for the
290 full amount which would be credited against such liability prior to the application of the
291 credit provided for in this subsection. Credits against quarterly or monthly payments under
292 Code Section 48-7-103 and credits against liability under Code Section 48-7-20 established
293 by this subsection shall not constitute income to the taxpayer. The number of new full-time
294 jobs shall be determined by comparing the monthly average number of full-time employees
295 subject to Georgia income tax withholding for the taxable year with the corresponding
296 period of the prior taxable year. Only those business enterprises that increase employment
297 by five or more in a less developed area shall be eligible for the credit; provided, however,
298 that within areas of pervasive poverty as designated under paragraphs (2) and (4) of
299 subsection (c) of this Code section businesses shall only have to increase employment by
300 two or more jobs in order to be eligible for the credit, provided that, if a business only
301 increases employment by two jobs, the persons hired for such jobs shall not be married to
302 one another. The average wage of the new jobs created must be above the average wage
303 of the county that has the lowest wage of any county in the state to qualify as reported in
304 the most recently available annual issue of the Georgia Employment and Wages Averages
305 Report of the Department of Labor. To qualify for a credit under this subsection, the
306 employer must make health insurance coverage available to the employee filling the new
307 full-time job; provided, however, that nothing in this subsection shall be construed to
308 require the employer to pay for all or any part of health insurance coverage for such an
309 employee in order to claim the credit provided for in this subsection if such employer does
310 not pay for all or any part of health insurance coverage for other employees. Credit shall
311 not be allowed during a year if the net employment increase falls below five or two, as
312 applicable. ~~Any credit received for years prior to the year in which the net employment~~
313 ~~increase falls below five or two shall not be affected.~~ In any year in which the net
314 employment increase falls below five or two, as applicable, the taxpayer shall forfeit the
315 right to the credit claimed for that taxable year. For the year that the net employment
316 increase falls below five or two, as applicable, a taxpayer that forfeits such right is
317 therefore liable for all past taxes imposed by this article for that taxable year and all past
318 payments under Code Section 48-7-103 for that taxable year that were foregone by the state
319 as a result of the credits provided by this Code section; provided, however that Code
320 Section 48-2-40 shall not apply to any such forfeiture. The state revenue commissioner

321 shall adjust the credit allowed each year for net new employment fluctuations above the
322 minimum level of five or two.

323 (f) Tax credits for ~~five~~ four years for the taxes imposed under this article shall be awarded
324 for additional new full-time jobs created by business enterprises qualified under
325 subsection (b) or (c) of this Code section. Additional new full-time jobs shall be
326 determined by subtracting the highest total employment of the business enterprise during
327 years two through ~~six~~ five, or whatever portion of years two through ~~six~~ five which has
328 been completed, from the total increased employment. The state revenue commissioner
329 shall adjust the credit allowed in the event of employment fluctuations during the additional
330 five years of credit.

331 (g) The sale, merger, acquisition, or bankruptcy of any business enterprise shall not create
332 new eligibility in any succeeding business entity, but any unused job tax credit may be
333 transferred and continued by any transferee of the business enterprise. The commissioner
334 of community affairs shall determine whether or not qualifying net increases or decreases
335 have occurred and may require reports, promulgate regulations, and hold hearings as
336 needed for substantiation and qualification.

337 (h) Any credit claimed under this Code section but not used in any taxable year may be
338 carried forward for ten years from the close of the taxable year in which the qualified jobs
339 were established, subject to forfeiture as provided in subsection (e) of this Code section,
340 but the credit established by this Code section taken in any one taxable year shall be limited
341 to an amount not greater than 100 percent of the taxpayer's state income tax liability which
342 is attributable to income derived from operations in this state for that taxable year.

343 (i) Notwithstanding Code Section 48-2-35, any tax credit claimed under this Code section
344 shall be claimed within one year of the earlier of the date the original tax return was filed
345 or the date such return was due as prescribed in subsection (a) of Code Section 48-7-56,
346 including any approved extensions.

347 (j) Taxpayers that initially claimed the credit under this Code section for any taxable year
348 beginning before January 1, 2009, shall be governed, for purposes of all such credits
349 claimed as well as any credits claimed in subsequent taxable years related to such initial
350 claim, by this Code section as it was in effect for the taxable year in which the taxpayer
351 made such initial claim."

352 SECTION 3.

353 Said article is further amended by revising Code Section 48-7-40.5, relating to tax credits for
354 employers providing approved retraining programs, to read as follows:

355 "48-7-40.5.

356 (a) As used in this Code section, the term:

357 (1) 'Approved retraining' means employer provided or employer sponsored retraining
358 that meets the following conditions:

359 (A) It enhances the functional skills of employees otherwise unable to function
360 effectively on the job due to skill deficiencies or who would otherwise be displaced
361 because such skill deficiencies would inhibit their utilization of new technology;
362 provided, however, that approved retraining shall not include any retraining on
363 commercially, mass produced software related to word processing, data base
364 management, presentations, spreadsheets, e-mail, personal information management,
365 or computer operating systems except a retraining tax credit shall be allowable for those
366 providing support or training on such software;

367 (B) It is approved and certified by the Technical College System of Georgia; and

368 (C) The employer does not require the employee to make any payment for the
369 retraining, either directly or indirectly through use of forfeiture of leave time, vacation
370 time, or other compensable time.

371 (2) 'Cost of retraining' means direct instructional costs as defined by the Technical
372 College System of Georgia including instructor salaries, materials, supplies, and
373 textbooks but specifically excluding costs associated with renting or otherwise securing
374 space.

375 (3) 'Employee' means any employee resident in this state who is employed for at least
376 25 hours a week; and who has been continuously employed by the employer for at least
377 16 consecutive weeks.

378 (4) 'Employer' means any employer upon whom an income tax is imposed by this
379 chapter.

380 (5) 'Employer provided' refers to approved retraining offered on the premises of the
381 employer or on premises approved by the Technical College System of Georgia by
382 instructors hired by or employed by an employer.

383 (6) 'Employer sponsored' refers to a contractual arrangement with a school, university,
384 college, or other instructional facility which offers approved retraining that is paid for by
385 the employer.

386 (b) A tax credit shall be granted to an employer who provides or sponsors an one or more
387 approved retraining program programs in a taxable year. The total amount of the tax credit
388 allowed per full-time employee amount of the tax credit shall be equal to one-half of the
389 costs of retraining per full-time employee, or \$500.00 per full-time employee, whichever
390 is less, for each employee who has successfully completed an approved retraining program;
391 provided, however, that in no event shall the amount of the tax credit authorized under this
392 subsection exceed \$1,250.00 per year per full-time employee who has successfully
393 completed more than one approved retraining program. No employer ~~may~~ shall receive a

394 credit if the employer requires that the employee reimburse or pay the employer for the cost
395 of retraining.

396 (c) Any tax credit claimed under this Code section for any taxable year beginning on or
397 after January 1, 1998, but not used for any such taxable year may be carried forward for
398 ten years from the close of the taxable year in which the tax credit was granted. The tax
399 credit granted to any employer pursuant to this Code section shall not exceed 50 percent
400 of the amount of the taxpayer's income tax liability for the taxable year as computed
401 without regard to this Code section. Notwithstanding Code Section 48-2-35, any tax credit
402 claimed under this Code section shall be claimed within one year of the earlier of the date
403 the original return was filed or the date such return was due as prescribed in subsection (a)
404 of Code Section 48-7-56, including any approved extensions.

405 (d) To be eligible to claim the credit granted under this Code section, the employer ~~must~~
406 shall certify to the department the name of the employee, the course work successfully
407 completed by such employee, the name of the provider of the approved retraining, and such
408 other information as may be required by the department to ensure that credits are only
409 granted to employers who provide or sponsor approved retraining pursuant to this Code
410 section and that such credits are only granted to employers with respect to employees who
411 successfully complete such approved retraining. The department shall adopt rules and
412 regulations and forms to implement this credit program. The department is expressly
413 authorized and directed to work with the Technical College System of Georgia to ensure
414 the proper granting of credits pursuant to this Code section.

415 (e) The Technical College System of Georgia is expressly authorized and directed to
416 establish such standards as it deems necessary and convenient in approving employer
417 provided and employer sponsored retraining programs. In establishing such standards, the
418 Technical College System of Georgia shall establish required hours of classroom
419 instruction, required courses, certification of teachers or instructors, progressive levels of
420 instruction, and standardized measures of employee evaluation to determine successful
421 completion of a course of study."

422 **SECTION 4.**

423 Said article is further amended by revising Code Section 48-7-40.12, relating to income tax
424 credits for business enterprises having qualified research expenses, to read as follows:

425 "48-7-40.12.

426 (a) As used in this Code section, the term:

427 (1) 'Base amount' means the product of a business enterprise's Georgia ~~taxable net~~
428 income gross receipts in the current taxable year and the average of the ratios of its
429 aggregate qualified research expenses to Georgia ~~taxable net income gross receipts~~ for

430 the preceding three taxable years or 0.300, whichever is less; provided, however, that a
431 business enterprise need not have had a positive taxable net income for the preceding
432 three taxable years in order to claim the credit provided in this Code section. For
433 purposes of this paragraph, 'Georgia gross receipts' shall be the numerator of the gross
434 receipts factor provided in subsection (d) of Code Section 48-7-31.

435 (2) 'Broadcasting' means the transmission or licensing of audio, video, text, or other
436 programming content to the general public, subscribers, or to third parties via radio,
437 television, cable, satellite, or the Internet or Internet Protocol and includes motion picture
438 and sound recording, editing, production, postproduction, and distribution. 'Broadcasting'
439 is limited to establishments classified under the 2007 North American Industry
440 Classification System Codes 515, broadcasting; ~~516~~ 519, Internet publishing and
441 broadcasting; 517, telecommunications; and 512, motion picture and sound recording
442 industries.

443 (3) 'Business enterprise' means any business or the headquarters of any such business
444 which is engaged in manufacturing, warehousing and distribution, processing,
445 telecommunications, broadcasting, tourism, ~~and~~ or research and development industries.
446 Such term shall not include retail businesses.

447 (4) 'Qualified research expenses' means qualified research expenses for any business
448 enterprise as that term is defined in Section 41 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as
449 amended, except that all wages paid and all purchases of services and supplies must be
450 for research conducted within the State of Georgia.

451 (b) A tax credit is allowed a business enterprise which has qualified research expenses in
452 Georgia in a taxable year exceeding a base amount, provided that the business enterprise
453 for the same taxable year claims and is allowed a research credit under Section 41 of the
454 Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended.

455 (c) The tax credit provided in subsection (b) of this Code section shall be 10 percent of the
456 excess over the base amount referred to in said subsection.

457 (d) Any unused credit claimed under this Code section may be carried forward ten years
458 from the close of the taxable year in which the qualified research expenses were made. The
459 credit taken in any one taxable year shall not exceed 50 percent of the business enterprise's
460 remaining Georgia net income tax liability after all other credits have been applied.

461 (e) In the first five years of a newly formed business enterprise's operations in this state,
462 where the amount of a credit claimed under this Code section exceeds 50 percent of a
463 taxpayer's liability for such taxes in a taxable year, the excess may be taken as a credit
464 against such taxpayer's quarterly or monthly payment under Code Section 48-7-103. Each
465 employee whose employer receives credit against such taxpayer's quarterly or monthly
466 payment under Code Section 48-7-103 shall receive a credit against his or her income tax

467 liability under Code Section 48-7-20 for the corresponding taxable year for the full amount
 468 which would be credited against such liability prior to the application of the credit provided
 469 for in this subsection. Credits against quarterly or monthly payments under Code Section
 470 48-7-103 and credits against liability under Code Section 48-7-20 established by this
 471 subsection shall not constitute income to the taxpayer."

472 **SECTION 5.**

473 Said article is further amended in Code Section 48-7-40.15, relating to alternative tax credits
 474 for base year port traffic, by revising paragraphs (1) and (5) of subsection (a) as follows:

475 "(1) 'Base year port traffic' means:

476 (A) For taxable years beginning prior to January 1, 2010, the total amount of net tons,
 477 containers, or twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU's); of product actually transported by
 478 way of a waterborne ship or vehicle through a port facility during the period from
 479 January 1, 1997, through December 31, 1997; provided, however, that in the event the
 480 total amount actually transported during such period was not at least 75 net tons, five
 481 containers, or ten twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU's), then 'base year port traffic'
 482 means 75 net tons, five containers, or ten twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU's).

483 (B) For all taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2010, the total amount of net
 484 tons, containers, or twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU's) of product actually imported
 485 into this state or exported out of this state by way of a waterborne ship or vehicle
 486 through a port facility during the second preceding 12 month period; provided,
 487 however, that in the event the total amount actually imported into this state or exported
 488 out of this state during such period was not at least 75 net tons, five containers, or ten
 489 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU's), then 'base year port traffic' means 75 net tons,
 490 five containers, or ten twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU's)."

491 "(5) 'Port traffic' means:

492 (A) For taxable years beginning prior to January 1, 2010, the total amount of net tons,
 493 containers, or twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU's) of product transported by way of
 494 a waterborne ship or vehicle through a port facility.

495 (B) For all taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2010, the total amount of net
 496 tons, containers, or twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU's) of product imported into this
 497 state or exported out of this state by way of a waterborne ship or vehicle through a port
 498 facility."

499 **SECTION 6.**

500 Said article is further amended by revising Code Section 48-7-40.17, relating to income tax
 501 credits for establishing or relocating headquarters into this state, to read as follows:

502 "48-7-40.17.

503 (a) As used in this Code section, the term:

504 (1) 'Average wage' means the average wage of the county in which a full-time new
505 quality job is located as reported in the most recently available annual issue of the
506 Georgia Employment and Wages Averages Report of the Department of Labor.

507 (2) 'Full-time New quality job' means employment for an individual which:

508 (A) Is located ~~at a headquarters in this state~~;

509 (B) Has a regular work week of 30 hours or more;

510 (C) Is not a job that is or was already located in Georgia regardless of which taxpayer
511 the individual performed services for;

512 ~~(C)(D)~~ Pays at or above 110 percent of the average wage of the county in which it is
513 located; and:

514 ~~(i) In tier 1 counties, the average wage of the county in which it is located;~~

515 ~~(ii) In tier 2 counties, 105 percent of the average wage of the county in which it is~~
516 ~~located;~~

517 ~~(iii) In tier 3 counties, 110 percent of the average wage of the county in which it is~~
518 ~~located; and~~

519 ~~(iv) In tier 4 counties, 115 percent of the average wage of the county in which it is~~
520 ~~located; and~~

521 ~~(D)(E)~~ Has no predetermined end date.

522 (3) ~~'Headquarters' means the principal central administrative office of a taxpayer or a~~
523 ~~subsidiary of the taxpayer.~~

524 (4) ~~'Tier' means a tier as designated pursuant to Code Section 48-7-40, as amended.~~

525 (b) ~~A taxpayer establishing its headquarters in this state or relocating its headquarters into~~
526 ~~this state which:~~

527 ~~(1) Within one year of the first date on which it withholds wages for employees at such~~
528 ~~headquarters or the headquarters of a subsidiary, defined as the taxpayer's 'affiliated~~
529 ~~group' within the meaning of Section 1504(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as~~
530 ~~amended, pursuant to the provisions of Code Section 48-7-101, employs at least 50~~
531 ~~persons in new full-time jobs at such headquarters;~~

532 ~~(2) Within one year of the first date on which it withholds wages for employees at such~~
533 ~~headquarters pursuant to the provisions of Code Section 48-7-101 incurs within the state~~
534 ~~a minimum of \$1 million in construction, renovation, leasing, or other costs related to~~
535 ~~such establishment or relocation; and~~

536 ~~(3) Elects not to receive the tax credits provided for by Code Sections 48-7-40,~~
537 ~~48-7-40.1, 48-7-40.2, 48-7-40.3, 48-7-40.4, 48-7-40.7, 48-7-40.8, and 48-7-40.9 for such~~
538 ~~jobs or such investment~~

539 ~~shall be allowed a credit for taxes imposed under this article equal to \$2,500.00 annually~~
 540 ~~per eligible new full-time job, or \$5,000.00 if the average wage of the new full-time jobs~~
 541 ~~created is 200 percent or more of the average wage of the county in which such jobs are~~
 542 ~~located per eligible new full-time job;~~

543 (b) A taxpayer establishing new quality jobs in this state or relocating quality jobs into this
 544 state which elects not to receive the tax credits provided for by Code Sections 48-7-40,
 545 48-7-40.1, 48-7-40.2, 48-7-40.3, 48-7-40.4, 48-7-40.7, 48-7-40.8, and 48-7-40.9 for such
 546 jobs and investments created by, arising from, related to, or connected in any way with the
 547 same project and, within one year of the first date on which the taxpayer pursuant to the
 548 provisions of Code Section 48-7-101 withholds wages for employees in this state and
 549 employs at least 50 persons in new quality jobs in this state, shall be allowed a credit for
 550 taxes imposed under this article:

551 (1) Equal to \$2,500.00 annually per eligible new quality job where the job pays 110
 552 percent or more but less than 120 percent of the average wage of the county in which the
 553 new quality job is located;

554 (2) Equal to \$3,000.00 annually per eligible new quality job where the job pays 120
 555 percent or more but less than 150 percent of the average wage of the county in which the
 556 new quality job is located;

557 (3) Equal to \$4,000.00 annually per eligible new quality job where the job pays 150
 558 percent or more but less than 175 percent of the average wage of the county in which the
 559 new quality job is located;

560 (4) Equal to \$4,500.00 annually per eligible new quality job where the job pays 175
 561 percent or more but less than 200 percent of the average wage of the county in which the
 562 new quality job is located; and

563 (5) Equal to \$5,000.00 annually per eligible new quality job where the job pays 200
 564 percent or more of the average wage of the county in which the new quality job is
 565 located;

566 provided, however, that where the amount of such credit exceeds a taxpayer's liability for
 567 such taxes in a taxable year, the excess may be taken as a credit against such taxpayer's
 568 quarterly or monthly payment under Code Section 48-7-103 but not to exceed in any one
 569 taxable year ~~\$2,500.00 annually per eligible new full-time job, or \$5,000.00 if the average~~
 570 ~~wage of the new full-time jobs created is 200 percent or more of the average wage of the~~
 571 ~~county in which such jobs are located for each new full-time job~~ the credit amounts in
 572 paragraphs (1) through (5) of this subsection for each new quality job when aggregated
 573 with the credit applied against taxes under this article. Each employee whose employer
 574 receives credit against such taxpayer's quarterly or monthly payment under Code Section
 575 48-7-103 shall receive a credit against his or her income tax liability under Code Section

576 48-7-20 for the corresponding taxable year for the full amount which would be credited
577 against such liability prior to the application of the credit provided for in this subsection.
578 Credits against quarterly or monthly payments under Code Section 48-7-103 and credits
579 against liability under Code Section 48-7-20 established by this subsection shall not
580 constitute income to the taxpayer. For each new full-time quality job created, the credit
581 established by this subsection may be taken for the first taxable year in which the new
582 full-time quality job is created and for the four immediately succeeding taxable years;
583 provided, however, that such new full-time quality jobs must be created within seven years
584 from the close of the taxable year in which the taxpayer first becomes eligible for such
585 credit. Credit shall not be allowed during a year if the net employment increase falls below
586 the 50 new full-time quality jobs required. Any credit received for years prior to the year
587 in which the net employment increase falls below the 50 new full-time quality jobs
588 required shall not be affected except as provided in subsection (f) of this Code section. The
589 commissioner shall adjust the credit allowed each year for net new employment
590 fluctuations above the 50 new full-time quality jobs required.

591 (c) The number of new full-time quality jobs to which this Code section shall be applicable
592 shall be determined by comparing the monthly average of full-time new quality jobs
593 subject to Georgia income tax withholding for the taxable year with the corresponding
594 average for the prior taxable year.

595 (d) Any credit claimed under this Code section but not used in any taxable year may be
596 carried forward for ten years from the close of the taxable year in which the qualified new
597 quality jobs were established.

598 (e) Notwithstanding Code Section 48-2-35, any tax credit claimed under this Code section
599 shall be claimed within one year of the earlier of the date the original return was filed or
600 the date such return was due as prescribed in subsection (a) of Code Section 48-7-56,
601 including any approved extensions.

602 (f) If the taxpayer has failed to maintain a new quality job in a taxable year, the taxpayer
603 shall forfeit the right to the credit claimed for such job in that year. For each year such new
604 quality job is not maintained, a taxpayer that forfeits such right is therefore liable for all
605 past taxes imposed by this article for that taxable year and all past payments under Code
606 Section 48-7-103 for that taxable year that were foregone by the state as a result of the
607 credits provided by this Code section; provided, however, that Code Section 48-2-40 shall
608 not apply to any such forfeiture.

609 (g) Taxpayers that initially claimed the credit under this Code section for any taxable year
610 beginning before January 1, 2009, shall be governed, for purposes of all such credits
611 claimed as well as any credits claimed in subsequent taxable years related to such initial

612 claim, by this Code section as it was in effect for the taxable year in which the taxpayer
613 made such initial claim.
614 ~~(e)~~(h) The commissioner shall promulgate any rules and regulations necessary to
615 implement and administer this Code section."

616 **SECTION 7.**

617 This Act shall become effective upon its approval by the Governor or upon its becoming law
618 without such approval and shall be applicable for all taxable years beginning on or after
619 January 1, 2009.

620 **SECTION 8.**

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