

The House Committee on Ways and Means offers the following substitute to HB 7:

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 the imposition, rate, computation, exemptions, and credits relative to income  
3 taxes, so as to provide for a tax credit for workforce-ready graduates employed in high-tech  
4 full-time jobs in rural counties in this state; to require the Department of Labor to establish  
5 certain criteria; to provide for conditions and limitations; to provide for definitions; to  
6 provide for rules and regulations and forms; to provide for related matters; to provide for an  
7 effective date and applicability; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

8 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

9 **SECTION 1.**

10 Article 2 of Chapter 7 of Title 48 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the  
11 imposition, rate, computation, exemptions, and credits relative to income taxes, is amended  
12 by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

13 "48-7-29.29.

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

15 (1) 'Employer' means an enterprise or organization, whether corporation, partnership,  
16 limited liability company, proprietorship, association, trust, business trust, real estate

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17 trust, or other form of organization, and its affiliates, which is registered and authorized  
18 to use the federal employment verification system known as 'E-Verify' or any successor  
19 federal employment verification system and is engaged in or carrying on any business  
20 activities within this state.

21 (2) 'High-tech full-time job' means employment:

22 (A) That is located in a rural county;

23 (B) As a data scientist, software developer, information security analyst, web  
24 developer, computer sales engineer, information technology manager, computer  
25 research scientist, network and systems administrator, or computer support specialist;

26 (C) Through an employer located in a rural county that is also a small business;

27 (D) That involves a regular work week of 30 hours or more;

28 (E) That has no predetermined end date; and

29 (F) That pays at or above the average hourly wage of the county with the lowest  
30 average hourly wage in the state, as reported in the most recently available annual issue  
31 of the Georgia Employment and Wages Averages Report of the Department of Labor.

32 (3) 'Rural county' means a county in this state that has a population of less than 50,000  
33 with 10 percent or more of such population living in poverty based upon the most recent,  
34 reliable, and applicable data published by the United States Bureau of the Census. On  
35 or before December 31 of each year, the commissioner of the Department of Community  
36 Affairs shall publish a list of such counties.

37 (4) 'Small business' means a business that is independently owned and operated, is not  
38 dominant in its field of operation, and employs fewer than 20 employees.

39 (5) 'Workforce-ready graduate' means an individual who has obtained a postsecondary  
40 credential from a nationally accredited institution in the discipline of engineering or  
41 computer, information, or data science within a high-tech area of study and who is  
42 certified by the Department of Labor as having completed a workforce readiness program

43 approved by the Department of Labor in accordance with subsection (b) of this Code  
44 section.

45 (b) By January 1, 2027, the Department of Labor shall adopt criteria for the establishment  
46 of workforce readiness programs and the certification of workforce-ready graduates for the  
47 purposes of this Code section.

48 (c)(1) On and after January 1, 2027, each workforce-ready graduate employed in a  
49 high-tech full-time job for at least 40 weeks during a 12 month period shall be eligible  
50 for an income tax credit in the amount of \$4,000.00 for each such year of employment  
51 against the tax imposed under this article; provided, however, that no individual shall be  
52 allowed more than \$12,000.00 of tax credits under this paragraph.

53 (2) No individual first employed in a high-tech full-time job before January 1, 2027,  
54 shall qualify to be eligible to receive the credit provided by this subsection.

55 (3) No individual shall be eligible to receive the credit provided by this subsection more  
56 than once.

57 (d) In no event shall the credit provided by subsection (c) of this Code section for a taxable  
58 year exceed the taxpayer's income tax liability. Any unused portion of the credit provided  
59 by subsection (c) of this Code section shall be permitted to be carried forward and applied  
60 to the taxpayer's tax liability for the subsequent three years. The credit provided by  
61 subsection (c) of this Code section shall not be applied against the taxpayer's prior years'  
62 tax liabilities.

63 (e) The commissioner shall promulgate rules and regulations and forms necessary to  
64 implement and administer the provisions of this Code section."

65 **SECTION 2.**

66 This Act shall become effective on July 1, 2026, and shall be applicable to all taxable years  
67 beginning on or after January 1, 2027.

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**SECTION 3.**

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