INTRODUCED

January 22, 2019

**H. 3697**

Introduced by Reps. Taylor, Allison, Gilliard and Simmons

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Read the first time January 22, 2019.

**A** **JOINT RESOLUTION**

TO PROVIDE THAT NOTWITHSTANDING THE PROVISIONS OF REGULATION 62‑6‑(D), SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF REGULATIONS, RELATING TO THE REQUIREMENT THAT AT LEAST TWENTY‑FIVE PERCENT OF CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTAIN ACADEMIC PROGRAMS MUST BE EARNED THROUGH INSTRUCTION BY THE INSTITUTION AWARDING THE DEGREE, THE COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION MAY GRANT ALTERNATE PROGRAM COMPLETION OPTIONS TO STUDENTS IMPACTED BY THE CLOSURE OF SIX EDUCATION CORPORATION OF AMERICA, INC., HIGHER EDUCATION PROVIDERS IN SOUTH CAROLINA IN 2018.

Whereas, on December 4, 2018, the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS) announced its withdrawal of accreditation from Education Corporation of America, Inc. (ECA), effective December 19, 2018, and extended to December 22, 2018; and

Whereas, on December 5, 2018, in response ECA announced the closure of all but one of its higher education providers nationwide effective no later than December 21, 2018; and

Whereas, the decision resulted in the closure of six ECA locations in South Carolina consisting of five campuses of Virginia College located respectively in Charleston, Columbia, Florence, Greenville, and Spartanburg, and the Golf Academy of America in Myrtle Beach; and

Whereas, the closure of the six campuses instantly left approximately one thousand South Carolina students without an opportunity to complete their Virginia College or Golf Academy academic programs; and

Whereas, most or many of the students were within a single course to one year of program completion; and

Whereas, in response to this crisis, institutions in this State, including technical and community colleges, are actively pursuing all options to help affected students; and

Whereas; states including South Carolina and accrediting agencies usually require member institutions to ensure they have delivered at least twenty‑five percent of their program curriculum to degree holders, consequently prohibiting teach‑out options for these former ECA students who cannot complete their academic programs through no fault of their own; and

Whereas, legislative redress is necessary and appropriate to mitigate the harm suffered by the victims of this unfortunate and unusual set of circumstances. Now, therefore,

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Notwithstanding the provisions of Regulation 62‑6-(D), South Carolina Code of Regulations, that require a student to earn at least twenty‑five percent of a higher education institution’s program curriculum requirements through instruction by the institution awarding the degree, the Commissioner on Higher Education may grant institutions of higher learning in this State the flexibility to use teach‑out options as needed in rare circumstances to facilitate program completion by students who attended any of the six education providers of the Education Corporation of America, Inc., that were located in this State closed in 2018 before the students could complete program requirements. These teach‑out options are intended for use in rare circumstances for any of these former Education Corporation of America, Inc., students who are close to program completion and otherwise would be impeded in their completion efforts by the provisions of Regulation 62‑6‑(D).

SECTION 2. This joint resolution takes effect upon approval of the Governor and expires July 1, 2020, unless extended by the General Assembly.

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