WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §18C-9-2

§18C-9-2. Legislative findings and purpose.

(a) The Legislature hereby finds and declares that:

(1) Every West Virginian should have access to education and training that will lead directly to quality employment opportunities within the state. In order for West Virginia to retain and attract business and industry, it must ensure that its workforce has such education and training;

(2) West Virginia currently faces a human capital crisis, as the state regularly ranks amongst the lowest states in the nation in workforce participation rates. Improving the state's workforce participation rates and the level of the workforce's career education is critical to economic development and making West Virginia a more prosperous state;

(3) The 2017 West Virginia Forward Report, a strategy for economic development and job growth, found that "investments in improving human capital are considered the most significant opportunity for improvement in West Virginia, especially because access to a specialized workforce is a significant factor for investment attraction…";

(4) According to the United States Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, the median yearly earnings of an individual with an associate's degree is approximately $6,604 more than an individual with only a high school diploma. Therefore, any investment by the state into a citizen obtaining such a degree would be repaid multiple times over through the citizen's increased contributions to the economy and tax base;

(5) West Virginia is currently facing a devastating drug epidemic, and the hope that comes with increased access to career education and higher quality employment opportunities is an indispensable tool against the spread of drug addiction; and

(6) An investment by the state into increasing access to post-secondary career education will provide its citizens the hope and opportunity for better career opportunities, and provide the state with the trained workforce needed to attract significant economic development.

(b) The purpose of this article is to provide West Virginians with hope and economic prosperity by increasing access to a higher level of career education that is needed to fulfill the needs of today's workforce and provide for further economic development.

WV Legislature