

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 2nd Session of the 54th Legislature (2014)

3 HOUSE BILL 2318

By: Walker

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5
6 AS INTRODUCED

7 An Act relating to higher education; amending 70 O.S.
8 2011, Sections 4103 and 4104, which relate to private
9 educational institutions; providing an exemption from
10 certain accreditation requirements for religious,
11 theological or faith-based institutions that meet
12 certain criteria; directing the Oklahoma State
13 Regents for Higher Education to promulgate certain
14 rules; requiring submission of certain evidence;
15 prohibiting religious, theological or faith-based
16 institutions from distributing certain advertisement
17 or marketing material; establishing limitations on
18 diplomas or degrees offered by religious, theological
19 or faith-based institutions; providing an effective
20 date; and declaring an emergency.

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1 reliable authority as to the quality of education or training
2 offered by institutions of higher education for the purposes of the
3 Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended.

4 B. A religious, theological or faith-based institution shall be
5 exempt from the accreditation requirements set forth in subsection A
6 of this section if the institution meets the following criteria and
7 submits related evidence to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher
8 Education:

9 1. Is a nonprofit institution owned, controlled, and operated
10 and maintained by a bona fide church or religious denomination,
11 lawfully operating as a nonprofit religious corporation;

12 2. Limits the educational program to the principles of the
13 associated church or denomination and the diploma or degree is
14 limited to evidence of completion of the program; and

15 3. Only grants degrees or diplomas in areas of study that
16 contain on their face in the written description of the title of the
17 degree or diploma being conferred a reference to the religious,
18 theological or faith-based aspect of the subject area of the degree.

19 C. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall
20 promulgate rules to implement the provisions of this section. The
21 rules shall include an application process by which a religious,
22 theological or faith-based institution submits evidence to the
23 Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education of its compliance with
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1 subsection B of this section. The process shall provide for
2 submission of additional evidence, including but not limited to:

3 1. Evidence that the institution holds at least a pre-
4 accreditation status with a nationally recognized accreditation
5 association;

6 2. A statement of the mission of the institution clearly
7 establishing that the mission is solely religious and the curricula
8 and programs offered clearly support that mission; and

9 3. Other appropriate, substantial evidence regarding the
10 programs offered by the institution.

11 D. A religious, theological or faith-based institution meeting
12 the criteria set forth in subsection B of this section shall be
13 prohibited from distributing marketing or advertising material
14 indicating an endorsement from the State of Oklahoma, the Oklahoma
15 State Regents for Higher Education or any other agency or agent of
16 the state regarding the education offered by the institution,
17 degrees or diplomas granted by the institution, or the institution
18 itself.

19 SECTION 2. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2011, Section 4104, is
20 amended to read as follows:

21 Section 4104. ~~A~~ A. Except as otherwise provided in subsection
22 B of this section, a private educational institution shall grant
23 only those degrees authorized by the Oklahoma State Regents for
24 Higher Education unless approved otherwise by a national or regional

1 accrediting agency which is recognized by the Secretary of the
2 United States Department of Education as a reliable authority as to
3 the quality of education or training offered by institutions of
4 higher education for the purposes of the Higher Education Act of
5 1965, as amended.

6 B. A religious, theological or faith-based institution meeting
7 the criteria established in subsection B of Section 4103 of this
8 title shall grant only degrees or diplomas in areas of study that
9 contain on their face in the written description of the title of the
10 degree or diploma being conferred a reference to the religious,
11 theological or faith-based aspect of the subject area of the degree.

12 SECTION 3. This act shall become effective July 1, 2014.

13 SECTION 4. It being immediately necessary for the preservation
14 of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is hereby
15 declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and
16 be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

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