

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 1st Session of the 59th Legislature (2023)

3 HOUSE BILL 2555

By: McBride and Baker

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6 AS INTRODUCED

7 An Act relating to scholarships; creating the  
8 Oklahoma Critical Industries Scholarship Program;  
9 providing for four-year pilot program; directing  
10 Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education to  
11 administer program; establishing minimum eligibility  
12 criteria for students; requiring identification of  
13 critical industry programs; including computer  
14 science, engineering, and cybersecurity programs;  
15 providing for matching state funds with funds from  
16 certain entities; requiring matching funds to be  
17 capped; authorizing certain reduction in payments;  
18 permitting set aside for funds; allowing funds to be  
19 used for program administration; directing submission  
20 of annual report of program; providing for  
21 codification; providing an effective date; and  
22 declaring an emergency.

23 BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

24 SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified  
in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 2501 of Title 70, unless there  
is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

A. Beginning July 1, 2023, there is hereby created the Oklahoma  
Critical Industries Scholarship Program. The program shall be a  
four-year pilot program to encourage high school graduates to pursue

1 degree-seeking or certificate-seeking post-secondary education  
2 training in industries which are critical to the economic growth of  
3 the state.

4 B. The Oklahoma Critical Industries Scholarship Program shall  
5 be administered by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.  
6 The scholarship amounts and student eligibility for the program  
7 shall be established by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher  
8 Education and may vary by individual higher education institution or  
9 technology center school. At a minimum, eligible students shall be:

10 1. Enrolled full-time at a state public higher education  
11 institution or state public technology center school;

12 2. Pursuing a degree or certification in an accredited critical  
13 industry program; and

14 3. Shall not be pursuing a graduate degree.

15 C. Eligible critical industry programs offered by state public  
16 higher education institutions and state public technology center  
17 schools shall be identified by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher  
18 Education, in coordination with the State Board of Career and  
19 Technology Education and shall include computer science,  
20 engineering, and cybersecurity programs.

21 D. The program shall match state funds up to Fifteen Million  
22 Dollars (\$15,000,000.00) on a pro rata basis with funds from state  
23 public higher education institutions, state public technology center  
24 schools, and private funding sources to provide scholarships for

1 eligible students. State matching funds shall be capped for each  
2 higher education institution and technology center school.

3 E. If sufficient funds are not available to award scholarships  
4 to eligible participants during any fiscal year, the Chancellor may  
5 make reductions in the payments made to participants.

6 F. At the time a scholarship is awarded on behalf of the  
7 Oklahoma Critical Industries Scholarship Program, the Oklahoma State  
8 Regents for Higher Education may set aside funds for the full  
9 commitment made to a participating student.

10 G. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education may utilize  
11 Oklahoma Critical Industries Scholarship Program designated funds  
12 for administration of the program.

13 H. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education in  
14 cooperation with the State Board of Career and Technology Education  
15 shall prepare and submit an annual report on the Oklahoma Critical  
16 Industries Scholarship Program on or before July 1 of each year to  
17 the Speaker of the Oklahoma House of Representatives, the President  
18 Pro Tempore of the Oklahoma State Senate, and the Governor.

19 SECTION 2. This act shall become effective July 1, 2023.

20 SECTION 3. It being immediately necessary for the preservation  
21 of the public peace, health or safety, an emergency is hereby  
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1 declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and  
2 be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

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