



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ALABAMA STATE HOUSE

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**HOUSE APPROVES ALABAMA FUTURE WORKFORCE INITIATIVE WITH
BIPARTISAN SUPPORT**
*BUTTRAM BILL GIVES MORE THAN 9500 ADDITIONAL STUDENTS
DUAL ENROLLMENT OPPORTUNITIES*

Montgomery – The Alabama House on Wednesday gave its bipartisan approval to the Alabama Future Workforce Initiative, a bill sponsored by State Rep. Mac Buttram (R – Cullman) and designed to expand Alabama’s career-tech dual enrollment program by providing opportunities for students across the state to gain the knowledge and skills they need to fill the jobs of the future.

The bill, which passed with a unanimous of 100 to 0, is included in the House Republican Caucus’ *Commonsense Conservative* legislative agenda.

“In order to continue our state’s economic success, we must ensure our students graduate with the skills to fill the high-paying, 21st century jobs that we have worked so hard to recruit,” Buttram said. “The Alabama Future Workforce Initiative is a win-win for our state. Students who participate in dual enrollment are more likely to graduate from high school, and in just two years, many dual enrollment students are also ready to enter Alabama’s workforce in high-paying, high demand jobs immediately upon graduation from high school.”

Buttram underscored that the bill could have an immediate impact on the state’s workforce and noted that there are hundreds of high-paying, highly-skilled job openings awaiting skilled applicants across the state.

Under the provisions of Buttram’s measure, a \$10 million scholarship program will be created for high school students to participate in career-technical dual enrollment programs throughout Alabama. With the cost of tax credits reaching no more than \$5 million annually, this initiative is a 2 to 1 return on investment for the state.

The individuals and businesses that donate to the scholarship program will receive a state income tax credit of up to 50% of their total contribution. The tax credit cannot exceed 50% of the contributor’s total Alabama income tax liability and cannot be more than \$500,000 per tax year.

Because businesses know best what training their future workers need, up to 80% of any contribution can be directed by a donor to a specific career-technical dual enrollment program or course at any two-year institution. The remaining 20% can be allocated at the discretion of the Department of Postsecondary Education, as long as the funds are directly related to career-technical dual enrollment program costs to students—ensuring that all dual-enrollment students benefit from the Initiative.

In 2013, only 2,100 students participated in Alabama's career-tech dual enrollment scholarship program – just 6.7 percent of the 31,500 students eligible to participate. Due in large part to lack of funding, many students, parents and caregivers are still partially responsible for tuition and other costs related to taking dual enrollment classes.

With an additional \$10 million in scholarship funds, 9,542 new students could participate in the program. This would increase total participation in Alabama's career-tech dual enrollment program by more than 23 percent. The Alabama Future Workforce Initiative helps bridge the gap, giving students who previously could not afford to participate in dual enrollment a chance to enroll.

The bill now goes to the Senate for its consideration.

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