

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

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

3 SENATE BILL 627

By: Boren

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5  
6 AS INTRODUCED

7 An Act relating to higher education; defining term;  
8 prohibiting certain institutions from taking certain  
9 actions due to a student's pregnancy; requiring an  
10 institution to make reasonable accommodations for  
11 pregnant students; providing for reasonable  
12 accommodations; providing for certain leave of  
13 absence to prepare for and take certain examinations;  
14 providing for certain leave of absence extension;  
15 requiring an enrolled student who takes certain leave  
16 of absence to return to certain program after certain  
17 period of time; providing exemption; directing  
18 certain consideration; directing certain office to  
19 investigate complaints and facilitate forwarding of  
20 certain complaints; requiring institutions to have  
21 certain written policies and procedures; requiring a  
22 copy of policies and procedures to be made available  
23 to faculty, staff, employees, and students; providing  
24 for codification; providing an effective date; and  
25 declaring an emergency.

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

20 SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified  
21 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 3251 of Title 70, unless there  
22 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

23 A. As used in this section, "institution" means:

1           1. An institution within The Oklahoma State System of Higher  
2 Education; or

3           2. A private institution of higher learning located within this  
4 state and accredited pursuant to Section 4103 of Title 70 of the  
5 Oklahoma Statutes that receives awards pursuant to Section 2604 of  
6 Title 70 of the Oklahoma Statutes, Oklahoma Tuition Equalization  
7 Grants pursuant to Section 2632 of Title 70 of the Oklahoma  
8 Statutes, or other scholarships or tuition aid funded with state  
9 appropriations.

10           B. An institution, including the faculty, staff, or other  
11 employees of the institution, shall not require an enrolled student  
12 to take a leave of absence, withdraw from a program, or limit her  
13 studies solely due to pregnancy. An institution, including the  
14 faculty, staff, or other employees of the institution, shall  
15 reasonably accommodate pregnant students so they may complete their  
16 courses of study and research. Reasonable accommodation within the  
17 meaning of this subsection may include but is not limited to:

18           1. Allowances for the pregnant student's health and safety,  
19 such as allowing the student to maintain a safe distance from  
20 hazardous substances;

21           2. Allowing the student to make up tests and assignments that  
22 are missed for pregnancy-related reasons; or

1 3. Allowing a student to take a leave of absence. Reasonable  
2 accommodations shall include the excusing of absences that are  
3 medically necessary consistent with the laws of this state.

4 C. An enrolled student who chooses to take a leave of absence  
5 because she is pregnant or has recently given birth shall be allowed  
6 a period consistent with the policies of the institution, or a  
7 period of six (6) additional months, whichever is longer, to prepare  
8 for and take preliminary and qualifying examinations and an  
9 extension of at least six (6) months toward completing the degree,  
10 or while in candidacy for a degree, unless a longer extension is  
11 medically necessary.

12 D. An enrolled student who chooses to take a leave of absence  
13 because she is pregnant or has recently given birth shall return to  
14 her program following a leave period of up to one academic semester,  
15 unless there is a medical reason for a longer absence, in which case  
16 her standing in the program shall be maintained during that period  
17 of absence.

18 E. The institution shall consider the student's requests for  
19 housing accommodation due to her pregnancy.

20 F. The Office of Civil Rights Enforcement within the Office of  
21 the Attorney General shall investigate complaints from students  
22 alleging pregnancy discrimination in violation of this act. The  
23 Office of Civil Rights Enforcement within the Office of the Attorney  
24 General shall facilitate the forwarding of complaints to the U.S.

1 Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights to investigate the  
2 institution's compliance with Title IX of the Education Amendments  
3 of 1972 (20 U.S.C. Section 1681, et seq.).

4 G. Each institution shall have a written policy for enrolled  
5 students on pregnancy discrimination and procedures for addressing  
6 pregnancy discrimination complaints under Title IX or this section.  
7 A copy of this policy shall be made available to faculty, staff, and  
8 employees in their required training. The policy shall be included  
9 in the student handbook and the institution's policies and  
10 procedures and made available to all students attending the  
11 institution.

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

13 SECTION 3. It being immediately necessary for the preservation  
14 of the public peace, health, or 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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