



LB 478 Testimony

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- The Coordinating Commission administers the Access College Early (ACE) grant program. This program pays for low-income Nebraska high school students to take college courses, most of which are dual-enrollment that count for both high school and college credit. ACE recipients remain enrolled in high school, graduate from high school, go on to college, and succeed in college at far higher rates than other low-income students.
- The ACE program is funded through a combination of state and federal funds. Last year, the Commission awarded nearly \$800,000 in ACE grants to low-income students. This bill would set aside 25 percent of those funds for students enrolled in “technical science” courses. The Commission has three primary objections to this proposed change:
 - 1) ACE grants are distributed on a first-come, first-served basis. Meaning, technical science students already have an equal opportunity to access these funds.
 - 2) Currently, less than 5 percent of ACE recipients took technical science courses. If the number of students enrolled in technical science courses does not reach 25 percent, LB 478 would not allow the Commission to redistribute those designated funds to other students. Those funds would go unused.
 - 3) Last year the Legislature appropriated \$30,000 for the Commission to automate the ACE application process. Prior to that, our financial aid administrator processed by hand more than 2,000 applications, along with supporting documents. High-school administrators and college financial aid coordinators have greatly appreciated this automation. If this bill were passed, the Commission would be forced to reconfigure this automation, at a cost greater than the original \$30,000.