

Committee on Education

CS/CS/CS/HB 487 — Agricultural Industry Certifications

by Appropriations Committee; Agriculture and Natural Resources Subcommittee; Higher Education and Workforce Subcommittee; and Rep. Raburn and others (CS/SB 1206 by Education Committee and Senator Montford)

The bill requires the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS), in cooperation with the Institute of Food and Agricultural Science at the University of Florida and the College of Agriculture and Food Sciences at Florida Agriculture and Mechanical University, to annually provide to the State Board of Education (SBE) and the Department of Education (DOE) information and industry certifications for farm occupations to be considered for placement on the Industry Certification Funding List and the Postsecondary Industry Certification Funding List. The information and industry certification provided must be based on the best available data.

The bill defines industry certification as a voluntary process through which students are assessed by an independent, third-party certifying entity using predetermined standards for knowledge, skills, and competencies, resulting in the award of a credential that is nationally recognized and must be:

- Within an industry that addresses a critical local or statewide economic need;
- Linked to an occupation that is included in the workforce system's targeted occupation list; or
- Linked to an occupation that is identified as emerging.

The bill requires the SBE to use the expertise of the DACS to develop and adopt rules for implementing an industry certification process, and specifies that, for farm occupations, industry certification must demonstrate student skill proficiency and be based upon the best available data to address critical local or statewide economic needs. The bill also requires the list of industry certifications approved by Workforce Florida, Inc., the DACS, and the DOE to be published and updated annually.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2014.

Vote: Senate 38-0; House 116-0