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SENATE BILL NO. 274

Offered January 14, 2026

A BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Chapter 31 of Title 23.1 an article numbered 10, consisting of sections numbered 23.1-3139 and 23.1-3140, relating to educational and cultural institutions; restoration of Hampton University as a land-grant university; Hampton University Land-Grant Restoration Fund established; requirements.

Patrons—Locke and Aird

Referred to Committee on Education and Health

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Chapter 31 of Title 23.1 an article numbered 10, consisting of sections numbered 23.1-3139 and 23.1-3140, as follows:

Article 10.**Hampton University as a Land-Grant University.**

§ 23.1-3139. Recognition of Hampton University as a land-grant university; Hampton University Land-Grant Restoration Fund established; eligibility for funding.

A. As used in this article, "land-grant university" means an institution of higher education in the United States designated to receive federal funding under the Morrill Act of 1862 (7 U.S.C. § 301 et seq.) and the Morrill Act of 1890 (7 U.S.C. § 321 et seq.).

B. Hampton University is hereby recognized and restored as an 1862 and 1890 land-grant university of the Commonwealth. As a land-grant university, Hampton University shall be eligible to receive federal funding and participate in federal and state programs established under the Morrill Act of 1862 (7 U.S.C. § 301 et seq.) and the Morrill Act of 1890 (7 U.S.C. § 321 et seq.), and any subsequent federal land-grant legislation.

C. There is hereby created in the state treasury a special nonreverting fund to be known as the Hampton University Land-Grant Restoration Fund, referred to in this section as "the Fund." The Fund shall be established on the books of the Comptroller. All funds appropriated for such purpose and any gifts, donations, grants, bequests, and other funds received on its behalf shall be paid into the state treasury and credited to the Fund. Interest earned on moneys in the Fund shall remain in the Fund and be credited to it. Any moneys remaining in the Fund, including interest thereon, at the end of each fiscal year shall not revert to the general fund but shall remain in the Fund. Moneys in the Fund shall be used solely for the purposes of supporting the restoration and recognition of Hampton University's status as a land-grant university through the provision of funding to Hampton University commensurate with the funding provided to Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and Virginia State University. Expenditures and disbursements from the Fund shall be made by the State Treasurer on warrants issued by the Comptroller.

D. Hampton University, as a redesignated 1862 and 1890 land-grant university of the Commonwealth pursuant to subsection B, shall be eligible for:

1. Competitive and formula-based federal land-grant funds administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Department of Education, the National Science Foundation, the National Institute of Health, the National Cancer Institute, and other relevant agencies connected to or involved in land-grant funding opportunities;

2. State matching funds, as required pursuant to federal law for designated 1862 and 1890 land-grant universities or supplemental land-grant awards; and

3. Participation in statewide agricultural research, extension, marine science, atmospheric science, pharmaceutical, and biomedical programs.

E. The recognition and restoration of Hampton University's status as a land-grant university pursuant to subsection B shall not be construed to alter the status of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University or Virginia State University as land-grant universities. No provision of this article or any appropriation or contribution to the Fund established pursuant to subsection C or funds provided to Hampton University as a land-grant university under the provisions of this article shall result in a reduction in any existing funding formula for Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University or Virginia State University. Any state matching funds required pursuant to subdivision D 2 shall be paid with such funds as may be appropriated for such purpose or through designated federal revenue streams.

§ 23.1-3140. Hampton University as a land-grant university; powers and duties.

Hampton University, as a land-grant university of the Commonwealth pursuant to § 23.1-3139, shall advance its mission as a land-grant university through:

1. Agricultural and environmental research that is beneficial to the Commonwealth's coastal, rural, and

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- 59 urban communities;
- 60 2. Participation in cooperative extension programs aimed at underserved populations, such as the
- 61 Cooperative Extension Service Program within Virginia State University as recognized pursuant to
- 62 § 23.1-2608;
- 63 3. Workforce development initiatives in biotechnology, proton therapy, cancer and pharmaceutical
- 64 research, marine and atmospheric science, and advanced engineering manufacturing;
- 65 4. Programs honoring Hampton University's historical service to African American and Native American
- 66 communities; and
- 67 5. Such other initiatives as are appropriate, reflect statewide needs, and are not duplicative of existing
- 68 initiatives.