



DOAA

Georgia Department
of Audits & Accounts

Greg S. Griffin
State Auditor

January 9, 2026

Honorable Stacey Evans
State Representative
409-D Coverdell Legislative Office Bldg.
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

SUBJECT: Fiscal Note
House Bill (LC 49 2454)

Dear Representative Evans:

The bill would provide HOPE Grant eligibility for students seeking an associate degree from Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) institutions only. It would also allow students to use the HOPE Grant for remedial courses required as part of an associate degree program. The bill does not impact academic requirements for the HOPE Grant.

Information from the Georgia Student Financial Commission (GSFC) suggests that the bill would result in additional HOPE Grant costs of \$30.6 million in fiscal year 2026 and \$36.8 million in fiscal year 2027 (see Table 1). The estimate includes the number of TCSG students with a college HOPE GPA of 2.0 or higher who are not receiving HOPE scholarship or grant funding. The growth rate is assumed at 20% based on enrollment growth between the 2024 and 2025 academic years with an allowance for additional growth. It also assumes 1.74 awards per student each year and awards of \$1,605 (the maximum award at 15 credit hours). Allowing students to use HOPE Grant funds for remedial courses would not create additional costs beyond what is captured in the cost projections shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Estimated Additional HOPE Grant Costs, FY2026 and FY2027

Impact of LC 49 2454	FY2024 Students	FY2025 Students	Projected FY2026		Projected FY2027	
			Students	Cost (in millions)	Students	Cost (in millions)
	11,984	15,911	19,093	\$30.6	22,912	\$36.8

Additional factors that may increase the cost of implementing the bill are discussed below.

- Current HOPE Scholarship students who lose eligibility due to a GPA less than 3.0 could begin using HOPE Grant funds for an associate degree at a TCSG institution under the bill. While those already enrolled at TCSG are included in the table above, it is not possible to determine whether students in other HOPE-eligible institutions would switch to TCSG institutions for this reason. GSFC reported the cost for 100 students at approximately \$100,000 per year.

- The lower GPA requirement (currently set at a 2.0 minimum) could further increase enrollment in TCSG associate programs beyond the projections above. This would increase HOPE Grant funding, as well as any TCSG formula funding.
- Associate degree programs are typically 60 credit hours, which may exceed the length of certificate and diploma programs currently covered by the HOPE Grant. As a result, costs could increase, though GSFC could not estimate the number of additional hours that would be generated by associate degree programs.

GSFC officials noted that the bill would require a rebuild of existing IT systems as well as changes to internal processes, regulations, documents, website design/content, and self-service student dashboard systems. It estimated a minimum of one year to make the required changes and one-time costs of \$270,000.

Respectfully,



Greg S. Griffin
State Auditor



Richard Dunn, Director
Office of Planning and Budget

GSG/RD/pj