

Second Regular Session  
Seventy-fourth General Assembly  
STATE OF COLORADO

**PREAMENDED**

*This Unofficial Version Includes Committee  
Amendments Not Yet Adopted on Second Reading*

LLS NO. 24-0628.02 Anna Petrini x5497

**SENATE BILL 24-143**

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**SENATE SPONSORSHIP**

**Coleman and Zenzinger,**

**HOUSE SPONSORSHIP**

**Herod,**

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**Senate Committees**

Education  
Appropriations

**House Committees**

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**A BILL FOR AN ACT**

101 **CONCERNING CREDENTIAL ASSESSMENT TOOLS, AND, IN CONNECTION**  
102 **THEREWITH, INTEGRATING FRAMEWORKS FOR NONDEGREE**  
103 **CREDENTIAL EVALUATION AND CLASSIFICATION INTO STATE**  
104 **EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE SYSTEMS AND ALIGNING**  
105 **STACKABLE CREDENTIAL PATHWAYS AND APPRENTICESHIP**  
106 **PROGRAMS WITH INTERNATIONAL CLASSIFICATION STANDARDS.**

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**Bill Summary**

*(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at <http://leg.colorado.gov>.)*

Current law requires the department of higher education

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.  
*Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material to be added to existing law.*  
*Dashes through the words or numbers indicate deletions from existing law.*

(department) and other higher education institutions to develop a framework for evaluating the quality of nondegree credentials. The bill formally recognizes the resulting quality and in-demand nondegree credentials framework (quality nondegree credentials framework) as the primary tool for assessing the quality of nondegree credentials offered in the state.

The bill requires the department to collaborate with various agencies to ensure the effective integration of the quality nondegree credentials framework within the state's education and workforce systems and to evaluate nondegree credentials offered through state-recognized programs to ensure the credentials meet the framework's quality standards. At least annually, the department shall supply a list of nondegree credential programs that meet the framework's quality standards for inclusion in the Colorado talent report and a credential registry endorsed by the state.

The department shall engage state agencies, educational institutions, international organizations, and other stakeholders to study and make recommendations about the adoption of the international standard classification of education (ISCED) as the state's standard framework for classifying nondegree credentials and ISCED's wider application in the state's education and workforce systems. The recommendations must include a process for assigning ISCED equivalency levels to nondegree credentials included in stackable credential pathways and apprenticeship programs. The bill requires the department to report its findings and recommendations on or before January 1, 2025.

Current law requires the department to create stackable credential pathways in growing industries. The bill requires the department to align the stackable credential pathways with appropriate ISCED equivalency levels on or before January 1, 2025.

The bill requires the office of future of work to coordinate with various agencies to determine ISCED equivalency levels for each apprenticeship program registered on and after January 1, 2025. The office of future of work shall then determine ISCED equivalency levels for each apprenticeship program registered before January 1, 2025.

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1 *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:*

2           **SECTION 1. Legislative declaration.** (1) The general assembly  
3 finds and declares that:

4           (a) The strength and prosperity of Colorado's economy hinges on  
5 economic mobility and educational opportunities for all Coloradans and

1 on the cultivation of a skilled workforce. According to the 2022 Colorado  
2 talent pipeline report, 91.4 percent of tier one top jobs and 70.4 percent  
3 of tier two top jobs in the state required some form of postsecondary  
4 education beyond high school, including traditional academic degrees, as  
5 well as industry certifications, badges, sub-baccalaureate certificates,  
6 professional licenses, and apprenticeships.

7 (b) Traditional undergraduate and graduate degree programs are  
8 the foundation of our postsecondary training system. However, they  
9 cannot fully meet Colorado's evolving skilled workforce needs.  
10 Nondegree credentials provide a valuable and complementary approach  
11 to bridging the skills gap. They offer learners a practical and expedited  
12 pathway to acquire the precise skills that employers urgently require to  
13 meet their immediate workforce needs.

14 (c) In 2021, Credential Engine reported 967,734 unique secondary  
15 and postsecondary education credentials in the United States. Existing  
16 accreditation and regulation systems provide quality assurance for degree  
17 programs but, with the exception of sub-baccalaureate certifications, do  
18 not take a sufficiently holistic approach to quality assurance for  
19 nondegree credentials. Existing systems fail to validate the legitimacy of  
20 nondegree credentials, specify how they relate to degree programs, and  
21 fail to indicate whether they develop in-demand skills that lead to good  
22 jobs. This places a considerable burden on both learners and employers  
23 who lack the time, expertise, and resources to verify the legitimacy and  
24 quality of these credentials. As a result, employers and learners continue  
25 to rely heavily on traditional degrees while quality nondegree credentials  
26 remain underused and undervalued.

27 (d) To address this need, Colorado requires a system that brings

1 quality assurance, clarity, and order to the complex landscape of both  
2 nondegree and traditional degree credentials by validating high-quality  
3 credentials and indicating the level of training or skill mastery they  
4 deliver; and

5 (e) With the help of a quality assurance framework and an  
6 internationally recognized standard classification system, Colorado  
7 employers can more easily assess candidate qualifications and skill  
8 profiles and align their hiring practices and policies with proper  
9 recognition of nondegree credentials. Knowing their chosen program  
10 carries validation, legitimacy, and value in the labor market empowers  
11 Colorado learners to make informed decisions about their careers.

12 (2) Therefore, the general assembly declares that the  
13 implementation of a quality nondegree credentials framework and a  
14 standard classification system is an essential step toward an equitable  
15 economy, economic mobility, workforce development, and clarity in  
16 educational and training attainment.

17 **SECTION 2.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** 23-5-145.8 as  
18 follows:

19 **23-5-145.8. Credential quality standards - report - definitions.**

20 (1) AS USED IN THIS SECTION, UNLESS THE CONTEXT OTHERWISE  
21 REQUIRES:

22 (a) "APPRENTICESHIP CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION" MEANS A  
23 CERTIFICATE AWARDED TO AN APPRENTICE IN RECOGNITION OF THE  
24 SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF A REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM.

25 (b) "COLORADO TALENT REPORT" MEANS THE REPORT PREPARED  
26 PURSUANT TO SECTION 24-46.3-103.

27 (c) "DEPARTMENT" MEANS THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER

1 EDUCATION CREATED AND EXISTING PURSUANT TO SECTION 24-1-114.

2 (d) "INDUSTRY CERTIFICATION" MEANS A CREDENTIAL AWARDED  
3 BY AN INDUSTRY-RECOGNIZED THIRD PARTY OR INDUSTRY-GOVERNING  
4 BOARD BASED ON AN INDIVIDUAL DEMONSTRATING BY ASSESSMENT THAT  
5 THE INDIVIDUAL HAS ACQUIRED THE DESIGNATED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS,  
6 AND ABILITIES RELATED TO A SPECIFIC OCCUPATION OR SKILL. INDUSTRY  
7 CERTIFICATIONS MAY BE TIME-LIMITED DEPENDENT UPON THE  
8 OCCUPATION OR INDUSTRY.

9 (e) "INTERNATIONAL STANDARD CLASSIFICATION OF EDUCATION"  
10 OR "ISCED" MEANS A COMPREHENSIVE FRAMEWORK FOR ORGANIZING  
11 EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMS THAT APPLIES UNIFORM AND  
12 INTERNATIONALLY AGREED-UPON CLASSIFICATIONS TO FACILITATE  
13 COMPARISONS OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMS ACROSS  
14 COUNTRIES.

15 (f) "NONDEGREE CREDENTIAL" MEANS A POSTSECONDARY  
16 CERTIFICATE, APPRENTICESHIP CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION,  
17 PROFESSIONAL LICENSE, OR INDUSTRY CERTIFICATION.

18 (g) "POSTSECONDARY CERTIFICATE" MEANS A CREDENTIAL  
19 AWARDED BY AN INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION AT AN  
20 UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL BASED ON COMPLETION OF ALL REQUIREMENTS  
21 FOR A PROGRAM OF STUDY, INCLUDING COURSEWORK AND EXAMS.  
22 POSTSECONDARY CERTIFICATES ARE NOT TIME-LIMITED AND DO NOT  
23 REQUIRE RENEWAL. "POSTSECONDARY CERTIFICATE" DOES NOT INCLUDE  
24 A DEGREE OR A CREDENTIAL AWARDED BY AN INSTITUTION OF HIGHER  
25 EDUCATION AFTER COMPLETION OF A BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN THE SAME  
26 PATHWAY.

27 (h) "QUALITY NONDEGREE CREDENTIALS FRAMEWORK" MEANS

1 THE QUALITY AND IN-DEMAND NONDEGREE CREDENTIALS FRAMEWORK  
2 DEVELOPED PURSUANT TO SECTION 23-5-145.6 (2) TO ASSESS  
3 CERTIFICATIONS, OCCUPATIONAL LICENSES, APPRENTICESHIP CERTIFICATES  
4 OF COMPLETION, NON-CREDIT CERTIFICATES, MICRO-CREDENTIALS, AND  
5 SUB-BACCALAUREATE FOR-CREDIT CERTIFICATES AND ESTABLISHES A  
6 RUBRIC FOR EVALUATING CREDENTIALS IN STATE-RECOGNIZED PROGRAMS.

7 (i) "STACKABLE CREDENTIAL PATHWAY" MEANS A SEQUENCE OF  
8 DEGREE OR NONDEGREE CREDENTIALS EARNED THROUGH VARIOUS MEANS,  
9 INCLUDING THROUGH ASSESSMENT OF PRIOR LEARNING, THAT MAY BE  
10 ACCUMULATED OVER TIME AND MOVE AN INDIVIDUAL ALONG A CAREER  
11 PATHWAY OR UP A CAREER LADDER.

12 (j) "STATE INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION" OR "INSTITUTION"  
13 HAS THE SAME MEANING AS SET FORTH IN SECTION 23-1-135.

14 (2) (a) THE STATE OF COLORADO FORMALLY RECOGNIZES THE  
15 QUALITY NONDEGREE CREDENTIALS FRAMEWORK DEVELOPED PURSUANT  
16 TO SECTION 23-5-145.6 (2) AS THE PRIMARY TOOL FOR EVALUATING AND  
17 ENSURING THE QUALITY OF NONDEGREE CREDENTIALS OFFERED WITHIN  
18 THE STATE.

19 (b) THE DEPARTMENT, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE COLORADO  
20 WORK FORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION,  
21 THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT, \_\_\_\_\_ THE COLORADO  
22 OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND THE COLORADO COMMUNITY  
23 COLLEGE SYSTEM SHALL ENSURE THE EFFECTIVE INTEGRATION OF THE  
24 QUALITY NONDEGREE CREDENTIALS FRAMEWORK WITHIN THE STATE'S  
25 EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE SYSTEMS.

26 (c) BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2026, AND ANNUALLY THEREAFTER,  
27 THE DEPARTMENT, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE COLORADO WORK FORCE

1 DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, THE  
2 DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT, AND THE COLORADO OFFICE  
3 OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, SHALL EVALUATE NONDEGREE CREDENTIALS  
4 OFFERED THROUGH STATE-RECOGNIZED PROGRAMS TO ENSURE THE  
5 CREDENTIALS MEET THE QUALITY STANDARDS SET FORTH IN THE QUALITY  
6 NONDEGREE CREDENTIALS FRAMEWORK. STATE-RECOGNIZED PROGRAMS  
7 THAT ARE REQUIRED TO ENSURE NONDEGREE CREDENTIAL OFFERINGS  
8 MEET THE QUALITY STANDARDS SET FORTH IN THE QUALITY NONDEGREE  
9 CREDENTIALS FRAMEWORK INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:

10 (I) THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT SUCCESS PROGRAM CREATED  
11 PURSUANT TO SECTION 22-54-138; AND

12 (II) THE STACKABLE CREDENTIAL PATHWAYS IDENTIFIED  
13 PURSUANT TO SECTION 23-5-145.6 (3).

14 (d) BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2026, AND ANNUALLY THEREAFTER,  
15 THE DEPARTMENT, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF  
16 EDUCATION, THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT, AND THE  
17 COLORADO OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, SHALL SUPPLY THE  
18 STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL WITH A LIST OF QUALITY  
19 NONDEGREE CREDENTIAL PROGRAMS THAT MEET THE QUALITY  
20 STANDARDS SET FORTH IN THE QUALITY NONDEGREE CREDENTIALS  
21 FRAMEWORK FOR INCLUSION IN THE COLORADO TALENT REPORT  
22 PRODUCED PURSUANT TO SECTION 24-46.3-103 (3)(a) AND IN A  
23 CREDENTIAL REGISTRY ENDORSED BY THE STATE.

24 (3) (a) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ENGAGE STATE AGENCIES,  
25 EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, INDUSTRY  
26 ASSOCIATIONS, AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS TO STUDY AND MAKE  
27 RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE ADOPTION OF ISCED AS THE

1 STATE'S STANDARD FRAMEWORK FOR CLASSIFYING NONDEGREE  
2 CREDENTIALS AND ISCED'S WIDER APPLICATION IN THE STATE'S  
3 EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE SYSTEMS. ON OR BEFORE JULY 31, 2025, THE  
4 DEPARTMENT SHALL COMPLETE A STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PROCESS  
5 TO INFORM A REPORT. THE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PROCESS MUST:

6 (I) SOLICIT INPUT FROM EMPLOYERS AND THEIR INDUSTRY OR  
7 TRADE ASSOCIATIONS;

8 (II) SOLICIT INPUT FROM STATE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER  
9 EDUCATION;

10 (III) SOLICIT INPUT FROM THE COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
11 AND EMPLOYMENT, INCLUDING THE OFFICE OF FUTURE OF WORK AND THE  
12 STATE APPRENTICESHIP AGENCY, THE STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
13 COUNCIL, AND THE COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION STUDENT  
14 PATHWAYS UNIT; AND

15 (IV) LEVERAGE THE RESOURCES AND TOOLS OF THE ISCED  
16 COMMUNITY.

17 (b) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL STUDY AND MAKE  
18 RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING HOW ISCED EQUIVALENCY LEVELS  
19 MAY BE:

20 (I) IMPLEMENTED AS THE STATE'S STANDARD FRAMEWORK FOR  
21 ORGANIZING AND CLASSIFYING NONDEGREE CREDENTIALS;

22 (II) ASSIGNED TO CREDENTIALS OR PACKAGES OF CREDENTIALS  
23 IDENTIFIED AND APPROVED PURSUANT TO SECTION 23-5-145.6(3) AND (4);

24 (III) ASSIGNED TO REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIPS;

25 (IV) WIDELY ADOPTED BY STAKEHOLDERS TO FACILITATE  
26 ALIGNMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMS AND ASSOCIATED  
27 QUALIFICATIONS; AND



1 (V) EFFECTIVELY INTEGRATED WITHIN THE STATE'S EDUCATION  
2 AND WORKFORCE SYSTEMS.

3 (c) ON OR BEFORE JULY 31, 2025, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL REPORT  
4 ITS FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE EDUCATION COMMITTEES  
5 OF THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, OR ANY SUCCESSOR  
6 COMMITTEES.

7 (d) ON OR BEFORE JULY 31, 2025, USING THE PROCESS  
8 RECOMMENDED PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (3)(b) OF THIS SECTION, THE  
9 DEPARTMENT SHALL ASSIGN ISCED EQUIVALENCY LEVELS TO THE  
10 CREDENTIALS INCLUDED IN THE STACKABLE CREDENTIAL PATHWAYS  
11 IDENTIFIED AND APPROVED PURSUANT TO SECTION 23-5-145.6(3) AND (4).  
12 THE ISCED ALIGNMENT PROCESS MUST CONSIDER CREDENTIAL PROGRAM  
13 RIGOR AND RELEVANCE.

14 (4) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL IMPLEMENT THIS SECTION SUBJECT TO  
15 AVAILABLE APPROPRIATIONS.

16 **SECTION 3.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** part 10 to article  
17 83 of title 8 as follows:

18 PART 10

19 APPRENTICESHIP INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

20 **8-83-1001. Definitions.** AS USED IN THIS PART 10, UNLESS THE  
21 CONTEXT OTHERWISE REQUIRES:

22 (1) "INTERNATIONAL STANDARD CLASSIFICATION OF EDUCATION"  
23 OR "ISCED" MEANS A COMPREHENSIVE FRAMEWORK FOR ORGANIZING  
24 EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMS THAT APPLIES UNIFORM AND  
25 INTERNATIONALLY AGREED-UPON CLASSIFICATIONS TO FACILITATE  
26 COMPARISONS OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMS ACROSS  
27 COUNTRIES.

1 (2) "OFFICE" MEANS THE OFFICE OF FUTURE OF WORK CREATED IN  
2 SECTION 8-15.8-103.

3 **8-83-1002. Apprenticeship program alignment with**  
4 **international standards.** (1) BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2026, AND  
5 ANNUALLY THEREAFTER, THE OFFICE, IN COORDINATION WITH THE  
6 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION,  
7 THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT, AND THE CAREER AND  
8 TECHNICAL EDUCATION DIVISION WITHIN THE COLORADO COMMUNITY  
9 COLLEGE SYSTEM, SHALL COLLABORATE WITH THE STATE APPRENTICESHIP  
10 AGENCY TO DETERMINE ISCED EQUIVALENCY LEVELS FOR EACH  
11 APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM REGISTERED ON OR AFTER JULY 31, 2025. IN  
12 MAKING ISCED EQUIVALENCY LEVEL DETERMINATIONS, THE OFFICE  
13 SHALL:

14 (a) APPLY THE PROCESS RECOMMENDED PURSUANT TO SECTION  
15 23-5-145.8 (3)(b); AND

16 (b) REQUIRE POSTING OF THE DETERMINED ISCED LEVEL  
17 ALONGSIDE THE APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM ON ALL ISSUED  
18 APPRENTICESHIP CERTIFICATES OF COMPLETION AND IN ALL PUBLIC  
19 LISTINGS, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, THE ELIGIBLE TRAINING  
20 PROVIDER LISTS DISSEMINATED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND  
21 EMPLOYMENT PURSUANT TO SECTION 8-83-225 (1)(c) AND THE COLORADO  
22 STATE APPRENTICESHIP RESOURCE DIRECTORY CREATED PURSUANT TO  
23 SECTION 8-83-308.

24 (2) ON OR BEFORE JANUARY 1, 2026, THE OFFICE SHALL  
25 DETERMINE ISCED EQUIVALENCY LEVELS FOR EACH APPRENTICESHIP  
26 PROGRAM REGISTERED BEFORE JULY 31, 2025. AFTER MAKING ISCED  
27 EQUIVALENCY LEVEL DETERMINATIONS, THE OFFICE SHALL REQUIRE

1 POSTING OF THE DETERMINED ISCED LEVEL ALONGSIDE THE  
2 APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM ON ALL ISSUED APPRENTICESHIP CERTIFICATES  
3 OF COMPLETION AND IN ALL PUBLIC LISTINGS, INCLUDING, BUT NOT  
4 LIMITED TO, THE ELIGIBLE TRAINING PROVIDER LISTS DISSEMINATED BY  
5 THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT PURSUANT TO SECTION  
6 8-83-225 (1)(c) AND THE COLORADO STATE APPRENTICESHIP RESOURCE  
7 DIRECTORY CREATED PURSUANT TO SECTION 8-83-308.

8 **SECTION 4.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 22-54-138, **amend**  
9 (3)(a) as follows:

10 **22-54-138. Career development success program - created -**  
11 **funding - report - legislative declaration - definitions - repeal.**

12 (3) (a) On or before August 15, 2016, and on or before July 1 each year  
13 thereafter, the work force development council, in collaboration with the  
14 department of higher education, the department of education, the  
15 department of labor and employment, the Colorado community college  
16 system, and the Colorado office of economic development, shall publish  
17 on the council's website a list of the qualified industry-credential  
18 programs and qualified workplace training programs THAT MEET THE  
19 QUALITY STANDARDS REQUIRED PURSUANT TO SECTION 23-5-145.8 (2)(c)  
20 for that school year. At least annually, the council and its partners shall  
21 identify and review the qualified industry-credential programs and  
22 qualified workplace training programs by identifying the jobs included in  
23 the Colorado talent report, prepared pursuant to section 24-46.3-103, with  
24 the greatest regional and state demand, including high-skill, high-wage  
25 jobs in in-demand industries, and, after consultation with relevant  
26 industries, identifying the programs that have labor market value and are  
27 likely to lead to the identified jobs. Any programs that the council

1 determines do not demonstrate labor market value may be removed from  
2 the council's website.

3 **SECTION 5.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 23-5-145.6, **add** (4.5)  
4 as follows:

5 **23-5-145.6. Opportunities for credential attainment - fund -**  
6 **report - definitions - repeal.** (4.5) THE STACKABLE CREDENTIAL  
7 PATHWAYS MUST MEET THE QUALITY STANDARDS REQUIRED PURSUANT TO  
8 SECTION 23-5-145.8 (2)(c).

9 **SECTION 6. Act subject to petition - effective date.** This act  
10 takes effect at 12:01 a.m. on the day following the expiration of the  
11 ninety-day period after final adjournment of the general assembly; except  
12 that, if a referendum petition is filed pursuant to section 1 (3) of article V  
13 of the state constitution against this act or an item, section, or part of this  
14 act within such period, then the act, item, section, or part will not take  
15 effect unless approved by the people at the general election to be held in  
16 November 2024 and, in such case, will take effect on the date of the  
17 official declaration of the vote thereon by the governor.