

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1671

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Higher Education

**Title:** An act relating to higher education accountability.

**Brief Description:** Regarding higher education accountability.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Anderson, Schmick and Angel.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Higher Education: 2/11/09, 2/17/09 [DPA].

**Brief Summary of Amended Bill  
(As Amended by House)**

- Directs the Education Research and Data Center to annually report the percentage of graduates from public institutions of higher education who are employed in the state, disaggregated by industry and student characteristics.
- Directs the Education Research and Data Center to report, in even numbered years, on student progress toward degree, disaggregated by student characteristics.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Wallace, Chair; Sells, Vice Chair; Anderson, Ranking Minority Member; Angel, Carlyle, Driscoll, Haler, Hasegawa and White.

**Staff:** Andi Smith (786-7304)

**Background:**

Education Data Center.

Chapter 401, section 3 of the Laws of 2007 established an "education data center" in the Office of Financial Management. The education data center, which uses the working title of "Education Research and Data Center (ERDC)," in collaboration with the Legislative

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

Evaluation and Accountability Program (LEAP) Committee, conducts analyses of early learning, K-12, and higher education programs and education issues across the P-20 system. The system includes the Department of Early Learning, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Professional Educator Standards Board, the State Board of Education, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB), and public and private non-profit higher education institutions. The ERDC also works with other agencies that have significant roles in conducting and supporting education research including the Employment Security Department, the Department of Information Services, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee, and the Washington Institute for Public Policy.

#### Employment Outcomes.

According to the 2007 study, "Employment and Earning of Graduates from Washington's Four-year Colleges and Universities" conducted by request of the House Higher Education Committee by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, 66 percent of baccalaureate graduates were employed in Washington within three quarters of graduation. That percentage fell to 58 percent employment for graduate and professional students.

The most common industries of employment for bachelors degree graduates, disaggregated by field of study were:

- Information and Professional Services - 17 percent;
- Education - 16 percent;
- Finance Insurance Administration - 16 percent; and
- Wholesale/Retail Trade - 12 percent.

The most common industries of employment for graduate or professional school graduates, disaggregated by field of study were:

- Education - 37 percent;
- Information and Professional Services - 19 percent;
- Health Care - 15 percent; and
- Public Administration - 8 percent.

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#### **Summary of Amended Bill:**

The Education Research and Data Center (ERDC) must conduct an analysis of the percentage of graduates from Washington's public baccalaureate institutions that were employed in Washington three quarters and 15 quarters after graduation. The employment rates must be disaggregated by major line of study and student characteristic including race and ethnicity, gender, and receipt of student financial assistance. The first report is due to the Legislature by December 1, 2010, and annually thereafter.

The ERDC must also report to the Legislature on student progress to degree. The report will include analysis of the impact of major selection and course taking behavior on total credits needed to earn a degree. This analysis must also be disaggregated by student characteristic including race, ethnicity, prior academic preparation, and whether the student transferred

from a community or technical college. The first report is due to the Legislature by December 1, 2010, and in even-numbered years thereafter.

**Bill Compared to Original Bill:**

The requirements for the Higher Education Coordinating Board to convene a workgroup to create a system through which employees and employers could verify the completion of a higher education degree or certificate are removed.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available

**Effective Date of Amended Bill:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) In these challenging times and with limited resources, arguments about what is next must be informed by good data. We need to have data that is relevant both to users of the higher education system and the people that provide for it. This bill is about providing good, deep data streams. The third component of this bill is already being addressed and we can resolve that duplication with an amendment. The issue of diploma verification is already handled by the National Clearinghouse and if that is resolved, that was the only concern of the Council of President's office. We are supportive of more analysis, more workforce outcomes, and are especially supportive of disaggregating by student characteristic. We've developed new methodologies for data collection and are supportive of this effort. Students are also in support of the bill. Anything that will make people aware of what is being produced by our higher education system and how that impacts Washington is a good thing.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Representative Anderson, prime sponsor; Mike Reilly, Council of Presidents; and Morgan Holmgren, Associated Students of Western Washington University and Washington Student Lobby.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.