
Education Committee

HB 2393

Brief Description: Creating the go global foreign study program.

Sponsors: Representatives McCoy, Sells, O'Brien, Wallace, Kenney, Quall, Chase, Hudgins, Hasegawa and Haigh.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates the Go Global Foreign Study Program (Program), subject to funding, to provide scholarships for high school students to study abroad for a semester or a school year.
- Requires the foreign study programs to be approved by the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel.
- Requires the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction to administer the Program and creates an account for deposit of any state or private funds for the Program.
- Authorizes disbursements of awards only if there are private funds or if state funds are equally matched by private funds.

Hearing Date: 1/29/10

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

Each year thousands of American high school students participate in foreign study and exchange programs where they live with a host family, attend school in another country, and have an opportunity for travel and other activities through the program.

There are a number of U.S.-based foreign study programs. The programs charge tuition and fees for participation, which can be \$10,000 or more for a full school year. There are also organizations that offer scholarships for students in foreign exchange programs.

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Foreign study programs that arrange for students from other countries to live and attend school in the United States must be approved by the U.S. Department of State. States, including Washington, also require these programs to be registered and meet certain minimum standards to assure the safety and well-being of the students. In Washington, this registration is done through the Secretary of State.

Programs that place U.S. students in other countries are not required to be approved. However, there is a non-profit organization called the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET) whose purpose is to identify reputable international youth exchange programs and provide leadership and support so that youth are provided with meaningful and safe international exchange experiences. The CSIET annually publishes an Advisory List of their approved U.S.-based foreign study and exchange programs. To be approved, programs must undergo an independent and certified audit that addresses such issues as appropriate screening and support of students and host-families, communications with parents, accurate advertising, and adequate insurance.

Summary of Bill:

Subject to funding, the Go Global Foreign Study Program (Program) is created to provide scholarships for Washington public high school students to study abroad for a semester or one year. Students applying for a scholarship must be enrolled in a public school before their year abroad, be of high school age (grades 9-12), and be accepted by a foreign study program approved for listing by the CSIET.

The maximum scholarship amount is \$5,000 for a full-year program and \$2,500 for a semester.

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) must administer the Program, including accepting scholarship applications, selecting recipients, providing publicity, and seeking private funding. The OSPI makes scholarship awards directly to the foreign study program on behalf of the recipient to offset the cost of tuition and fees.

A Program account is created, into which are deposited any appropriations or funds from private sources. The OSPI is authorized to disburse funds from the Program account for scholarship awards only if the funds are from private sources or if any state funds are equally matched by funds from private sources. No further appropriation is required to disburse funds from the Program account.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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