

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6358

As of January 28, 2010

Title: An act relating to tuition surcharges for students who do not have timely completion of degrees.

Brief Description: Regarding tuition surcharges for students who do not have timely completion of degrees.

Sponsors: Senators Kilmer, Zarelli, Rockefeller, Becker, Shin, Tom and Parlette.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education & Workforce Development: 1/27/10.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Staff: Alicia Kinne (786-7784)

Background: The length of time it takes students to complete a bachelor's degree has been an issue of concern for higher education policy makers. Part of the concern about timely degree completion is because the cost of instruction at a public institution is supported by both tuition revenue and taxpayer dollars (state General Fund appropriations). Currently, higher education institutions establish course repeat policies. Most institutions limit the number of times a course may be repeated and/or the circumstances under which a course may be repeated. Institutions may charge students who accumulate more than 125 percent of credits, drop more than 25 percent of credits, or remain on academic probation for more than one quarter or semester, an additional surcharge in addition to regular tuition and fees.

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

Summary of Bill (Proposed Substitute): Institutions must develop a policy to limit students who wish to repeat a course in which they have already received a passing grade. Policies must allow students to enroll in that course on a space available basis after the fourth day of the quarter or semester.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on July 1, 2010.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill prevents students who have already passed a course from crowding out students who still need the course to graduate. In tough economic times, this helps to ensure students get the courses they need to graduate.

OTHER: The bill does not provide for exceptions or unforeseen circumstances. Concerns about students who may have passed the courses in high school with programs such as advanced placement but wish to retake them at the college level. Institutions can more adequately develop a policy around this than the Legislature can. This may create barriers for students who are trying to advance within a program.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Kilmer, prime sponsor.

OTHER: Peter Sterr, Richard Lum, WSA; Mike Reilly, Council of Presidents; Cynthia Torres-Jimenez, State Board for Community & Technical Colleges; Jim Fridley, UW Faculty; Julie Suchanek, The Evergreen State College.