

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1453

As Reported by House Committee On:
Higher Education

Title: An act relating to state need grant eligibility.

Brief Description: Changing state need grant eligibility provisions.

Sponsors: Representatives Seaquist, Bergquist, Fey, Pollet and Santos.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 2/5/13, 2/12/13 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Reduces the minimum number of required credits from six to three quarter credits for State Need Grant eligibility.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 18 members: Representatives Seaquist, Chair; Pollet, Vice Chair; Haler, Ranking Minority Member; Zeiger, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Fagan, Hansen, Hargrove, Johnson, Magendanz, Pedersen, Reykdal, Riccelli, Sawyer, Scott, Sells, Smith, Tarleton and Wylie.

Staff: Luke Wickham (786-7146).

Background:

State Need Grant.

The State Need Grant is designed to offset a portion of educational costs for needy and disadvantaged students. During the 2011-12 academic year, 74,703 Washington students attending 68 institutions had much of their tuition paid for through the State Need Grant Program. However, 32,171 students were eligible but unserved during the 2011-12 year. In 2011-12, \$267 million dollars was dedicated to the State Need Grant program, which made up 94 percent of expenditures on Washington student aid programs.

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.

Students must be enrolled or accepted for enrollment on at least a half time basis (six quarter credits) to be eligible for the State Need Grant.

State Need Grant for Part-Time Students.

In 1990 legislation extended State Need Grant eligibility to students enrolled for six credits or more. In 2005 legislation directed the Higher Education Coordinating Board (the predecessor to the Student Achievement Council) to develop a two-year pilot project to assess the need for, and feasibility of, allowing students enrolled for at least four quarter credits to be eligible for State Need Grants. Students participating in the pilot met the income and residency requirements of the State Need Grant program, attended one of nine participating schools, and were enrolled for at least four quarter credits. Five hundred thousand dollars was appropriated for this pilot during the 2005-07 biennium.

The Higher Education Coordinating Board report on the part-time State Need Grant pilot indicated that more than 80 percent of all part time participants enrolled for six or more credits sometime during the year. The report indicated that the reasons why students enrolled part-time included work hours, family obligations, childcare, and costs associated with higher enrollment. Higher percentages of pilot participants were financially independent from their parents, had their own children, and were single parents than the entire State Need Grant population.

In 2007 the Legislature allowed students to enroll for a minimum of three quarter credits or the equivalent semester credits to be eligible for the State Need Grant and raised the appropriation to \$500,000 per year. This reduction in credit eligibility was made on a provisional basis and ended in June 2011.

Summary of Bill:

The bill reduces the amount of credits that students must be enrolled to be eligible for the State Need Grant from at least a half-time basis to three quarter credits or the equivalent semester credits.

The bill makes technical corrections to references in the needy or disadvantaged student definition so that they refer to the correct statutory subsections.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Many students who work full time or have other obligations need State Need Grants to succeed. The numbers show that this would help our part-time students. Many of the students that this bill would support are nontraditional students who have a job and are taking care of their families. This allows students to have access to State Need Grants as a tool, and would allow more students to attend on a less than half-time basis. The grants would be prorated based on the number of enrolled credits.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Nova Gattman, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board; and Scott Copeland, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.