
Higher Education Committee

HB 1817

Brief Description: Adding eligibility criteria for higher education financial aid.

Sponsors: Representatives Hudgins, Chandler, Pettigrew, Ross, Appleton, Moscoso, Santos, Goodman, McCoy, Hunt, Springer, Pollet, Freeman, Habib, Reykdal, Tarleton, Lias, Sawyer, Wylie, Sells, Fitzgibbon, Pedersen, Ryu, Riccelli, Farrell, Cody, Dunshee, Bergquist, Roberts, Maxwell and Fey.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Adds two new categories of eligible students for both the State Need Grant (SNG) and the College Bound Scholarship (CBS).
- Permits students who have been granted Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) status by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services to be eligible for both the SNG and the CBS.
- Permits students who qualify under the fifth category of the resident student definition to be eligible for the SNG and the CBS.

Hearing Date: 2/19/13

Staff: Luke Wickham (786-7146).

Background:

Resident Students.

Classification as a resident student allows an individual to pay resident tuition rates. There are thirteen categories of resident student, including the following five:

1. a financially independent student who has established a domicile in Washington State for one year immediately prior to the first day of class for which the student has registered and has established domicile in the state for purposes other than educational;
2. a dependent student, if one or both of the student's parents or legal guardians have maintained a domicile in Washington for at least one year before starting class;

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.

3. a student classified as a resident on or before May 31, 1982, who was enrolled at a state institution during any term of the 1982-83 school year, so long as the student's enrollment is continuous;
4. a student who has spent at least 75 percent of his or her junior and senior years in high schools in this state, whose parents or legal guardians have been domiciled in the state for at least one year within the five-year period before the student graduates from high school, and who enrolls in a public higher education institution within six months of leaving high school (for as long as the student remains continuously enrolled for three quarters or two semesters in any calendar year); or
5. a student who has:
 - a. either completed the full senior year of high school and obtained a diploma at a Washington high school or received the equivalent of a diploma;
 - b. lived in Washington for at least three years immediately prior to receiving the diploma or its equivalent;
 - c. continuously lived in the state after receiving the diploma or its equivalent and until being admitted to the institution of higher education; and
 - d. provided to the institution an affidavit indicating that the individual will file an application to become a permanent resident at the earliest opportunity the individual is eligible to do so and a willingness to engage in other activities necessary to acquire citizenship.

Except as provided in certain sections of the resident student eligibility statute, persons who are not citizens of the United States are considered nonresident students for tuition purposes.

State Need Grant.

The State Need Grant (SNG) is designed to offset a portion of educational costs for low-income students. According to the Washington Student Achievement Council, during the 2011-12 academic year:

- 74,703 Washington students attending 68 institutions were served by the SNG;
- 32,171 students were eligible but unserved; and
- \$267 million was dedicated to the SNG, which made up 94 percent of expenditures on Washington student aid programs.

Students are eligible for the SNG only if they are "resident students" according to the first four categories (1 through 4) listed above.

College Bound Scholarship.

The College Bound Scholarship program (CBS) provides financial aid covering the remaining cost of tuition at public institution rates after subtracting other forms of aid a student receives, plus a \$500 book allowance. Students must sign up in the seventh or eighth grade, graduate high school with a C or better average, be without a felony conviction, and successfully apply to a state higher education institution. Students must qualify for free or reduced lunch when they sign up in middle school, and must have a family income below 65 percent of the median family income for Washington when they graduate from high school.

Students also must be "resident students" according to the first four categories (1 through 4) listed above.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) Status.

The United States Department of Homeland Security exercises prosecutorial discretion not to remove certain individuals, including those that are granted DACA status. Individuals may be granted DACA status for a period of two years, subject to renewal, and may be eligible for employment authorization. Individuals must demonstrate through verifiable documentation to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services that they meet the following conditions:

- were under the age of 31 on June 15, 2012;
- came to the United States before reaching his or her 16th birthday;
- have continuously resided in the United States since June 15, 2007;
- were physically present in the United States on June 15, 2012 and at the time of the DACA request;
- entered the United States without inspection before June 15, 2012, or his or her immigration status expired by that date;
- are currently in school, have graduated or obtained a certificate of completion from high school, have obtained a general education development (GED) certificate, or are an honorably discharged veteran of the Coast Guard or Armed Forces of the United States; and
- have not been convicted of a felony, significant misdemeanor, three or more other misdemeanors, and do not otherwise pose a threat to national security or public safety.

Summary of Bill:

Eligibility for both the SNG and CBS includes the fifth category of "resident students" as defined above. This category includes any person who has:

- either completed the full senior year of high school and obtained a diploma at a Washington high school or received the equivalent of a diploma;
- lived in Washington for at least three years immediately prior to receiving the diploma or its equivalent;
- continuously lived in the state after receiving the diploma or its equivalent until being admitted to the institution of higher education; and
- provided to the institution an affidavit indicating that the individual will file an application to become a permanent resident at the earliest opportunity the individual is eligible to do so and a willingness to engage in other activities necessary to acquire citizenship.

Students are also eligible for the CBS if they have been granted DACA status by the time they enroll in an eligible higher education institution. Students are eligible for the SNG if they have been granted DACA status and have resided in Washington for at least three years immediately prior to being admitted to an eligible institution of higher education.

A technical correction is made. The term "Higher Education Coordinating Board or its successor" is replaced with the term "Office of Student Financial Assistance."

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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