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**HOUSE BILL 1033**

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**State of Washington 65th Legislature 2017 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Manweller, Hargrove, Haler, Buys, and Muri

AN ACT Relating to expanding access to the state need grant by modifying awards for students attending private four-year institutions of higher education; amending RCW 28B.92.050 and 28B.92.065; and creating a new section.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature found that for the 2015-16 academic year there were over twenty-four thousand students eligible to receive a state need grant who went unserved, and the legislature's intent is to provide as many eligible students as possible with an award to pursue their dreams of a postsecondary education. For the 2016-17 academic year, the maximum state need grant award to students attending a private four-year institution in the state was two thousand five hundred seventy dollars more than the maximum state need grant award to students attending the least expensive public four-year institution. The legislature recognizes and supports the contribution that private four-year institutions make to create an educated and informed citizenry and acknowledges that these institutions are an integral part of the state's higher education system. However, an original goal of the state need grant program was to assist financially needy and disadvantaged students to attend Washington public colleges and universities. Therefore, the legislature believes that grant awards to students attending private four-year institutions should be no greater than awards provided to students attending any of the public four-year institutions. In addition, restructuring the grants awarded to students attending private four-year institutions will allow the state to serve more students eligible for the state need grant who are currently unserved.

**Sec.**  RCW 28B.92.050 and 2011 1st sp.s. c 11 s 161 are each amended to read as follows:

The office shall have the following powers and duties:

(1) Conduct a full analysis of student financial aid as a means of:

(a) Fulfilling educational aspirations of students of the state of Washington, and

(b) Improving the general, social, cultural, and economic character of the state.

Such an analysis will be a continuous one and will yield current information relevant to needed improvements in the state program of student financial aid. The office will disseminate the information yielded by their analyses to all appropriate individuals and agents.

(2) Design a state program of student financial aid based on the data of the study referred to in this section. The state programs will supplement available federal and local aid programs. The state programs of student financial aid will not exceed the difference between the budgetary costs of attending an institution of higher education and the student's total resources, including family support, personal savings, employment, and federal, state, and local aid programs.

(3) Determine and establish criteria for financial need of the individual applicant based upon the consideration of that particular applicant. In making this determination the office shall consider the following:

(a) Assets and income of the student.

(b) Assets and income of the parents, or the individuals legally responsible for the care and maintenance of the student.

(c) The cost of attending the institution the student is attending or planning to attend.

(d) Any other criteria deemed relevant to the office.

(4) Set the amount of financial aid to be awarded to any individual needy or disadvantaged student in any school year. Students who enroll in a private four-year institution of higher education in Washington for the 2018-19 academic year or later shall receive a base grant award no greater than the base grant award for students attending the least expensive public four-year institution of higher education as defined in RCW 28B.10.016.

(5) Award financial aid to needy or disadvantaged students for a school year based upon only that amount necessary to fill the financial gap between the budgetary cost of attending an institution of higher education and the family and student contribution.

(6) Review the need and eligibility of all applications on an annual basis and adjust financial aid to reflect changes in the financial need of the recipients and the cost of attending the institution of higher education.

**Sec.**  RCW 28B.92.065 and 2015 3rd sp.s. c 36 s 4 are each amended to read as follows:

Beginning with the 2015-2017 omnibus appropriations act and each biennium thereafter, reductions in tuition levels resulting from section 3, chapter 36, Laws of 2015 3rd sp. sess. will allow the legislature to reduce state need grant appropriations by an equal amount from the 2013-2015 fiscal biennium amounts. ((~~The legislature does not intend to reduce award levels for private colleges and universities below the 2014-15 academic year levels.~~))

By reducing the overall cost of tuition, the legislature in future biennia is better able and intends to serve those students currently eligible but unserved in the state need grant.

**--- END ---**