**1659-S2.E AMS RAND S5396.1 - NOT FOR FLOOR USE**

**E2SHB 1659** - S AMD **1478**

By Senator Randall

**ADOPTED 03/04/2022**

Strike everything after the enacting clause and insert the following:

"NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature finds that Washington is not on track to meet the state's educational attainment goal that at least 70 percent of adults, aged 25 to 44, have a postsecondary credential by the year 2023. Adults without a postsecondary credential are more at risk of unemployment, less likely to earn a living wage, and more vulnerable to economic downturns. The student achievement council has deemed that there are four areas essential to achieve the state's 70 percent attainment goal: Affordability, enrollment, completion, and student supports. In terms of affordability, the legislature recognizes that the Washington college grant is one of the country's largest and most generous financial aid programs. However, the legislature also recognizes that despite an increase in financial aid funding and eligibility, enrollments at institutions of higher education are down due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many prospective students have made the decision to delay pursuing higher education for a myriad of reasons. However, fewer enrollments mean fewer graduates going on to work in high paying jobs, which could have a significant impact on the state's workforce and economy in the future.

The legislature intends to continue to work towards making higher education more affordable and accessible for the state's population by expanding the Washington college grant program. In addition, the legislature intends to provide additional support beyond tuition and fees with the recognition that many students struggle to pay for books, supplies, room and board, transportation, child care, and more while pursuing their education. Grants beyond tuition and fees can help bridge the gap for students who are struggling to pay for the entire cost of attendance at an institution of higher education, and are often the difference between a student staying enrolled and completing his or her education and dropping out. Since the legislature intends that the grant be provided to the student to assist with basic needs expenses, the legislature recognizes that the student should have a choice in whether the grant is received for those expenses or is applied to a student's account to cover additional institutional costs. Therefore, the legislature intends to bridge the gap and support students by making postsecondary education more affordable, encouraging more enrollments, and helping students complete their credentials so tomorrow's workforce and economy are stronger.

**Sec.**  RCW 28B.92.030 and 2019 c 406 s 21 are each amended to read as follows:

As used in this chapter:

(1) "Bridge grant" means an annual stipend provided in addition to the Washington college grant to provide supplementary financial support to low-income students to cover higher education expenses beyond tuition and fees, such as books, lab fees, supplies, technology, transportation, housing, and child care.

(2) "Council" means the student achievement council.

((~~(2)~~)) (3) "Financial aid" means either loans, grants, or both, to students who demonstrate financial need enrolled or accepted for enrollment as a student at institutions of higher education.

((~~(3)~~)) (4) "Financial need" means a demonstrated financial inability to bear the total cost of education as directed in rule by the office.

((~~(4)~~)) (5) "Gift aid" means financial aid received, such as grants, scholarships, or worker retraining assistance that provides funds for educational purposes with no obligation of repayment. "Gift aid" does not include student loans, work-study programs, the basic food employment and training program administered by the department of social and health services, or other employment assistance programs that provide job readiness opportunities and support beyond the costs of tuition, books, and fees.

(6) "Institution" or "institutions of higher education" means:

(a) Any public university, college, community college, or technical college operated by the state of Washington or any political subdivision thereof; ((~~or~~))

(b) Any other university, college, school, or institute in the state of Washington offering instruction beyond the high school level that is a member institution of an accrediting association recognized by rule of the council for the purposes of this section and that agrees to and complies with program rules adopted pursuant to RCW 28B.92.150. However, any institution, branch, extension or facility operating within the state of Washington that is affiliated with an institution operating in another state must be:

(i) A separately accredited member institution of any such accrediting association;

(ii) A branch of a member institution of an accrediting association recognized by rule of the council for purposes of this section, that is eligible for federal student financial aid assistance and has operated as a nonprofit college or university delivering on-site classroom instruction for a minimum of ((~~twenty~~)) 20 consecutive years within the state of Washington, and has an annual enrollment of at least ((~~seven hundred~~)) 700 full-time equivalent students; or

(iii) A nonprofit institution recognized by the state of Washington as provided in RCW 28B.77.240; or

((~~(iv)~~)) (c) An approved apprenticeship program under chapter 49.04 RCW.

((~~(5)~~)) (7) "Maximum Washington college grant":

(a) For students attending two or four-year institutions of higher education as defined in RCW 28B.10.016, is tuition and estimated fees for ((~~fifteen~~)) 15 quarter credit hours or the equivalent, as determined by the office, including operating fees, building fees, and services and activities fees.

(b) For students attending private four-year not-for-profit institutions of higher education in Washington, in the 2019-20 academic year, is ((~~nine thousand seven hundred thirty-nine dollars~~)) $9,739 and may increase each year afterwards by no more than the tuition growth factor.

(c) For students attending two-year private not-for-profit institutions of higher education in Washington, in the 2019-20 academic year, is ((~~three thousand six hundred ninety-four dollars~~)) $3,694 and may increase each year afterwards by no more than the tuition growth factor.

(d) For students attending four-year private for-profit institutions of higher education in Washington, in the 2019-20 academic year, is ((~~eight thousand five hundred seventeen dollars~~)) $8,517 and may increase each year afterwards by no more than the tuition growth factor.

(e) For students attending two-year private for-profit institutions of higher education in Washington, in the 2019-20 academic year, is ((~~two thousand eight hundred twenty-three dollars~~)) $2,823 and may increase each year afterwards by no more than the tuition growth factor.

(f) For students attending Western Governors University-Washington, as established in RCW 28B.77.240, in the 2019-20 academic year, is ((~~five thousand six hundred nineteen dollars~~)) $5,619 and may increase each year afterwards by no more than the tuition growth factor.

(g) For students attending approved apprenticeship programs, is tuition and fees, as determined by the office, in addition to required program supplies and equipment.

((~~(6)~~)) (8) "Office" means the office of student financial assistance.

((~~(7)~~)) (9) "Tuition growth factor" means an increase of no more than the average annual percentage growth rate of the median hourly wage for Washington for the previous ((~~fourteen~~)) 14 years as the wage is determined by the federal bureau of labor statistics.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28B.92 RCW to read as follows:

(1) As part of the Washington college grant program, the bridge grant pilot program is created.

(2) The office shall award $500 annual bridge grants to eligible students beginning with the 2022-23 academic year.

(a) Eligible students are Washington college grant recipients who:

(i) Are enrolled on at least a half-time basis at a pilot institution of higher education;

(ii) Receive a maximum award; and

(iii) Are not recipients of the college bound scholarship program under chapter 28B.118 RCW.

(b) The bridge grant shall be applied to a student's financial aid package after all other gift aid has been awarded to the student.

(c) The office shall ensure that each institution of higher education provides students with the option to either apply the bridge grant to the student's account or have the bridge grant disbursed to the student.

(3) The council shall study the implementation of the bridge grant pilot program on postsecondary student enrollment, persistence, and to the extent possible, completion. The council must use a rigorous research design which may include evaluating the effects of the bridge grant by comparing outcomes for students who received the bridge grant to outcomes for students with similar educational and demographic characteristics who did not receive the bridge grant. The educational research and data center shall submit to the council data that includes, but is not limited to, unit record demographics, high school academic history, any available academic outcomes, and other data deemed necessary by the council to conduct this study. A report is due to the appropriate committees of the legislature by June 1, 2027.

(4) "Pilot institution of higher education" means Eastern Washington University, The Evergreen State College, Highline College, Yakima Valley College, Wenatchee Valley College, and Tacoma Community College.

(5) The bridge grant pilot program expires June 30, 2026.

(6) This section expires June 30, 2027.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The following acts or parts of acts are each repealed:

(1)RCW 28B.92.060 (State need grant awards) and 2019 c 298 s 4 & 2012 c 229 s 558;

(2)RCW 28B.92.070 (Persian Gulf veterans—Limited application of RCW 28B.92.060) and 2012 c 229 s 559, 2004 c 275 s 38, & 1991 c 164 s 3; and

(3)RCW 28B.92.110 (Application of award) and 2009 c 238 s 10, 2004 c 275 s 40, & 1969 ex.s. c 222 s 16.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  If specific funding for the purposes of this act, referencing this act by bill or chapter number, is not provided by June 30, 2022, in the omnibus appropriations act, this act is null and void."

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**ADOPTED 03/04/2022**

On page 1, line 3 of the title, after "security;" strike the remainder of the title and insert "amending RCW 28B.92.030; adding a new section to chapter 28B.92 RCW; creating new sections; repealing RCW 28B.92.060, 28B.92.070, and 28B.92.110; and providing an expiration date."

EFFECT: (1) Eliminates the increases in Washington College Grants awards.

(2) Makes the bridge grant program a 4-year pilot program at the following institutions of higher education: Eastern Washington University, The Evergreen State College, Highline College, Yakima Valley College, Wenatchee Valley College, and Tacoma Community College.

(3) Bridge grant awards are $500 annually.

(4) Requires a study by the student achievement council on the effectiveness of the bridge grant pilot program.

(5) The bridge grant pilot program expires June 30, 2026.