

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1400

As Reported By House Committee On:

Higher Education

Title: An act relating to remedial or precollege work at public institutions of higher education.

Brief Description: Prohibiting the use of state funds or student operating fees for most remedial or precollege classes at institutions of higher education.

Sponsors: Representatives Silver, Mulliken, Blanton, B. Thomas, Huff, Mielke, Honeyford, Hargrove and Boldt.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 2/16/95, 2/17/95 [DPS].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Carlson, Chairman; Mulliken, Vice Chairman; Benton; Blanton; Delvin; Goldsmith and Sheahan.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Jacobsen, Ranking Minority Member; Mason, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Basich and Mastin.

Staff: Susan Hosch (786-7120).

Background: According to a national survey of colleges and universities released by the National Center for Educational Statistics, 30 percent of college freshmen took at least one remedial or precollege course in the fall of 1989.

Community Colleges: During the 1993-94 academic year, 18,027 full time equivalent (FTE) students were enrolled in precollege classes in community and technical colleges. The system expended about \$55,660,000 in state general fund monies and student operating fees on the classes. About 2,243 of those FTE students, or 12 percent, had received a high school diploma within the previous three years. Most of the recent high school graduates were enrolled in English (36 percent) or math (51 percent). However, 4 percent of the recent high school graduates were

enrolled in Adult Basic Education (ABE) classes. ABE classes are designed to bring students to an eighth grade level. Eight percent of the recent graduates were enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes.

Regional Institutions: During the 1993-94 academic year, 621 students at Central Washington University were enrolled in state supported precollege classes or laboratories in English, writing, spelling, reading, and mathematics. These students comprised 124 FTEs. During that academic year, the cost of providing these classes was about \$169,000 in state general fund and student operating fee dollars. At Eastern Washington University, 1,121 students were enrolled in precollege classes during the 1993-94 academic year. These students constituted 115 FTEs. The cost of providing the classes was estimated to be \$102,516. Sixty-three students at Western were enrolled in a state supported precollege classes that same year. These students generated 21 FTEs. The cost of serving these students was estimated to be \$7,971 in state general fund monies and student operating fees.

The Evergreen State College does not offer state supported precollege classes.

Research Universities: State supported precollege classes at the University of Washington (UW) are restricted to participants in the Educational Opportunity Program for disadvantaged students. During the 1993-94 academic year, 379 students were enrolled in precollege mathematics and English classes. These students constituted 188 FTEs. The university expended \$294,330 on these classes. Other UW students may take precollege classes offered by Seattle community colleges or through university extension programs. Any extension classes are self supporting.

During the 1993-94 academic year, at Washington State University, 231 students were enrolled in precollege classes. These students generated 46 FTEs. Most of the students were enrolled in precollege mathematics. The remaining 18 were enrolled in an ESL class. The university expended \$24,350 on these classes in the 1993-94 academic year.

Summary of Substitute Bill: By June 30, 1996, the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) will adopt common definitions of remedial and precollege material and course work. As it deliberates, the board will consult with K-12 and higher education faculty, teachers, and administrators. The definitions adopted by the board will be rigorous, challenging students to come to college well prepared to engage in college work. Each public college and university will adopt the definitions.

Beginning with the fall 1996 academic term, with two exceptions, the public baccalaureate universities and college may not offer precollege classes funded by state monies or student operating fees. The exceptions: English as a second language classes and precollege classes for students in equal opportunity programs may be offered using state funds and student operating fees. At the beginning of the fall

1996 academic term, any credits received for precollege classes cannot be used to meet the number of credits required for a baccalaureate or associate degree.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The State Board of Education is added to the list of groups to be consulted by the HECB as it determines the definition of precollege, and English as a second language classes may be offered with state monies.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The citizens of Washington have already paid for students to acquire certain knowledge and skills in high school. Asking them to pay for remedial education in baccalaureate institutions with high admission standards is unreasonable. Students need incentives to come to college well prepared for college work. If they need remedial work, they should pay the costs associated with that work. Institutions of higher education need to agree on the definition of precollege material. This legislation would provide a forum for that discussion. The legislation mandates responsibility and accountability for students and educational professionals. The State Board of Education would like to receive a copy of the report (original bill).

Testimony Against: Concerns were expressed about the possible impact of the legislation on older returning students. Concerns were also expressed about any approach to remedial education that could be construed to be punitive.

Testified: Representative Jean Silver, prime sponsor; Larry Davis, State Board of Education (supports); Larry Ganders, Washington State University (concerns); and George Durrie, Eastern Washington University (concerns).