

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1318

As Reported By House Committee On:

Higher Education
Appropriations

Title: An act relating to the Washington scholars program.

Brief Description: Revising provisions for the Washington scholars program.

Sponsors: Representatives Carlson, Mulliken and Mastin; by request of Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 2/2/95, 2/3/95 [DPS];

Appropriations: 2/27/95, 3/3/95 [DP2S(w/o sub HE)].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Carlson, Chairman; Mulliken, Vice Chairman; Jacobsen, Ranking Minority Member; Mason, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Benton; Blanton; Delvin; Goldsmith and Sheahan.

Staff: Susan Hosch (786-7120).

Background: The Washington Scholars Program was created by the Legislature in 1981. The program has a number of purposes. First, the program annually honors three graduating high school seniors in each legislative district. Scholars who are selected have distinguished themselves through scholastic achievement, leadership ability and contributions to their communities. Second, the program is intended to raise public awareness of the contribution of these outstanding students through recognition ceremonies. The third purpose: to facilitate communication between high schools and colleges by providing scholars with information about college programs and available scholarships. And, the program was created originally to provide a state mechanism for using private funds for scholarships for outstanding high school seniors. In 1984 another purpose was added: to provide tuition waivers for Washington scholars. The program is administered by the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB).

In 1984, the Legislature provided Washington scholars attending public colleges and universities with a mandatory waiver of tuition and services and activities fees for undergraduate studies. In order to receive the waiver, students must enter the public institution within three years of high school graduation. The law was amended in 1992 and again in 1993. Under current law, students who received the award before June 30, 1994, will continue to receive total waivers of tuition and fees. Institutions of higher education have the option of providing full, partial, or no waivers to students who receive the award after that date. Any waivers offered are subject to the overall waiver "cap" that limits the ability of institutions to waive more than a statutory percentage of total operating fees collected.

In 1988, the Legislature created a comparable scholarship program for Washington scholars who attend in-state independent colleges and universities. If funds are available, these scholars may receive a grant of up to the amount of tuition and services and activities fees at the research universities. The grant is contingent upon an equal matching grant by the independent institution. Funding for the scholarship has never been increased to keep pace with tuition and fee increases at the research universities. During the 1994-95 academic year, Washington scholars attending independent institutions receive about \$1,872, while scholars attending the University of Washington receive \$2,907.

Summary of Substitute Bill: With the exception of technical colleges, public colleges and universities are required to waive tuition and services and activities fees for Washington scholars selected before June 30, 1994. The waiver must be used for undergraduate studies. Students selected after that date will not receive a waiver.

Scholars selected after June 30, 1994, will receive a grant, if funds are available. The amount of the grant cannot exceed tuition and fees at the public research universities. The grant must be used for undergraduate studies. The students may use the grant to attend either a public or independent college or university within the state. Independent institutions must continue to provide an equal matching grant to recipients attending their institutions. Scholars may transfer among in-state colleges and universities and continue to receive the grant.

The grants for Washington scholars will be administered by the HECB.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Public colleges and universities are defined to include the state universities, regional universities, The Evergreen State College, community colleges and technical colleges.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on July 1, 1995.

Testimony For: Due to a variety of factors, Washington scholars attending different colleges and universities within the state do not receive the same amount in state sponsored scholarships. With the changes adopted in 1992 to the waiver law for Washington scholars, the possibility exists that some scholars will not receive a waiver at all when they attend a state college or university. These scholars are outstanding students who need to be encouraged to stay in the state of Washington. The scholarship program proposed in this legislation will help to equalize grant assistance to scholars selected in 1995 and beyond. It will also equalize assistance to students attending public and independent institutions.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Tom Parker, Washington Friends of Higher Education; Sue Longstreth, Washington Council on Vocational Technical Education; and John Klacik, Higher Education Coordinating Board (all in support).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The second substitute bill be substituted therefor and the second substitute bill do pass and do not pass the substitute bill by Committee on Higher Education. Signed by 30 members: Representatives Silver, Chairman; Clements, Vice Chairman; Huff, Vice Chairman; Pelesky, Vice Chairman; Sommers, Ranking Minority Member; Valle, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Basich; Beeksma; Brumsickle; Carlson; Chappell; Cooke; Crouse; G. Fisher; Foreman; Grant; Hargrove; Hickel; Jacobsen; Lambert; Lisk; McMorris; Poulsen; Reams; Rust; Sehlin; Sheahan; Talcott; Thibaudeau and Wolfe.

Staff: Jennifer Priddy (786-7118).

Summary of Recommendation of Committee on Appropriations Compared to Recommendation of Committee on Higher Education: Null and void clause added. If an appropriation referencing the legislation is not made in the omnibus budget act, the legislation will be null and void.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on July 1, 1995. However, the bill is null and void if not funded in the budget.

Testimony For: The Washington Scholars Program is an important vehicle to honor excellence in higher education. Currently recipients may or may not receive a tuition and fee waiver from the institution of their choice, but a recipient who attends a private institution will receive a grant. This bill would establish a grant for all recipients.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Shirley Ort, Higher Education Coordinating Board (pro).