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SECOND SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5557

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State of Washington

54th Legislature

1995 Regular Session

By Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Sutherland, Bauer, Wood, Palmer and Kohl)

Read first time 03/06/95.

1 AN ACT Relating to assessment of prior experiential learning  
2 programs in higher education; creating new sections; and declaring an  
3 emergency.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds and declares that:

6 Providing greater flexibility and access to undergraduate degree  
7 programs for the working adult population is of vital importance to the  
8 expansion of economic opportunities for individuals and families.

9 Existing degree programs are not providing the needed flexibility  
10 for many working adults. In order to provide greater access to a  
11 larger portion of the working adult population, more creative  
12 alternatives to the traditional time and place-bound educational  
13 delivery system must be developed.

14 As demonstrated in other states, the opportunity for working adult  
15 students to earn college credit for clearly demonstrating important  
16 knowledge that they have attained in the workplace is a key element for  
17 providing greater access to undergraduate degree programs. These  
18 credit-for-prior-learning-experience opportunities have also been shown  
19 to be most effective when they are offered as a component of distance

1 learning programs. Many institutions of higher education in Washington  
2 provide opportunities to earn credit for prior learning experience, but  
3 they are not adequately included as a component of distance learning  
4 programs.

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The higher education coordinating board  
6 shall contract with one or more public higher education institutions to  
7 provide access to higher education on a pilot project basis in Clark  
8 county beginning in the fall term of 1995. The access will be provided  
9 through a distance learning degree program that contains an opportunity  
10 for students to earn credits for prior experiential learning in a  
11 portfolio-based credit for prior experiential learning opportunity  
12 structured by the guidelines and standards set forth by the northwest  
13 association of schools and colleges.

14 The higher education coordinating board shall monitor and evaluate  
15 the pilot project baccalaureate degree program and shall report to the  
16 senate and house of representatives higher education committees by  
17 December 1, 1997. Elements in the report shall include but not be  
18 limited to the number of students served, the number of degrees  
19 granted, the ability of the credit for prior learning component to be  
20 self-sustaining, and the satisfaction of the students, graduates, and  
21 the employer community.

22 In order to best meet the needs of the citizens of southwest  
23 Washington, the higher education coordinating board will work together  
24 with the administrations of local public higher education institutions  
25 and the local business community in developing the pilot project.

26 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** If specific funding for the purposes of this  
27 act, referencing this act by bill number, is not provided by June 30,  
28 1995, in the omnibus appropriations act, this act shall be null and  
29 void.

30 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** This act is necessary for the immediate  
31 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the  
32 state government and its existing public institutions, and shall take  
33 effect immediately.

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