

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1574

As Reported By House Committee On:

Higher Education

Title: An act relating to financial aid portability.

Brief Description: Creating the historically Black college fund pilot project.

Sponsors: Representatives Mason, Radcliff, Carlson, Dunn, Cooper, Conway, Tokuda, Kenney, Doumit, Quall, Sheahan, Hatfield, Blalock, Dickerson, Scott, O'Brien, Costa, Cody and Regala.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 2/14/97, 2/21/97 [DPS].

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; Radcliff, Vice Chairman; Mason, Ranking Minority Member; Kenney, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Butler; Dunn; O'Brien; Sheahan and Van Luven.

Staff: Suzi Morrissey (786-7120).

Background: Under current law, students receiving state need grants must attend institutions of higher education located in the state of Washington. The Higher Education Coordinating Board has made some limited exceptions to this requirement for reciprocity students attending colleges in Oregon, Idaho, and British Columbia.

According to an article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, dated November 24, 1995, 11 states permit their students to take their state financial aid money with them when they attend college in another state. This practice is known as portability. The article goes on to report the following:

- (1) That a number of influential educators and lawmakers believe that expanding portable aid might help states with high enrollment pressures to avoid some of the costs associated with building new campuses.

- (2) That the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education (WICHE) is studying ways in which its members might make their student aid portable in the West.
- (3) That some states that are projecting enrollment declines are positioning themselves to accept portable-aid students. One such state is North Dakota.
- (4) That some officials in some public colleges oppose portability.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Historically Black College Fund pilot project is created. Through the pilot project, needy Washington residents may take their state need grant awards to any of five historically Black institutions of higher education. The institutions include Morehouse College, Howard University, Spelman College, Grambling State University, and Tuskegee University.

The Higher Education Coordinating Board will administer the pilot project. The board will establish criteria for student and institutional participation and will limit the number of participants to no more than 100 students during the course of the pilot. By December 15, 2002, the board will report to the Governor and appropriate legislative committees on the results of the pilot project. The report will include a recommendation on the extent to which financial aid portability should be permitted for Washington's college students.

The authority to administer this financial aid portability pilot project expires on June 30, 2002.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The board will limit participation in the pilot to no more than 100 students. Grambling State and Howard Universities replace Morris-Brown College and Clark-Atlanta University as participating institutions. Portability is limited to state need grants, and the project will end in the year 2002 rather than the year 2000.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Historically Black colleges provide an excellent education for students from very diverse ethnic backgrounds. In addition to providing outstanding academic programs, many of the colleges instill a sense of community pride and responsibility into their students. Eighty percent of the African-American students who graduate from college get their diploma from an historically Black college.

African-American students who have attended one of the colleges are often transformed by the experience. Many Washington students who have attended one of these colleges have returned to their communities with the tools to become financially successful and to act as positive role models and community leaders.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Dawn Mason, prime sponsor (pro); Reverend Cecilia Johnson-Britten (pro); Chris B. Bennett (pro); Tony ORange, Commission on African-American Affairs (pro); Judy Turpin, American Association of University of Women (pro); and Maxine Mimms (pro).