

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
Representative Don Carlson, Chair

BILL ANALYSIS
HB 1622

BRIEF DESCRIPTION: Establishing the Hispanic American endowed scholarship program.

BACKGROUND: Population & Enrollment. According to 1988 population statistics, Hispanic Americans comprise approximately 3.6 percent of Washington's population. They are enrolled in higher education at the lower rate of 2.6 percent. Hispanic American students participate in greater numbers in lower division courses than in upper division courses. They are also represented in greater numbers in community colleges than in four-year institutions.

Graduation Statistics: A recent study on the Status of Minority Students and Faculty in Washington's Higher Education System indicates a low graduation rate among Hispanic American students. While, on the average, Hispanic American students enroll at approximately 2.6 percent of the total student enrollment, they are conferred only 1.1 percent of all bachelor's degrees awarded at four-year institutions.

A discrepancy exists between the enrollment and graduation rates among Hispanic American students. This discrepancy may otherwise be characterized as a low retention rate. Low retention rates among Hispanic American students are attributable to a variety of factors including limited financial resources, inadequate preparation, and difficulty in adjusting to a campus environment.

SUMMARY: The bill establishes the Hispanic American Endowed Scholarship Program. The Higher Education Coordinating Board is responsible for administering the program. Its powers and duties are described to include, but not be limited to, establishing both an advisory and a screening committee; selecting scholarship recipients; and soliciting and accepting grants and donations from public and private sources for the program.

Eligibility is described to include a student familiar with the educational and cultural needs of the Hispanic community, who is financially needy, a full-time resident student at an institution of higher education in this state and who promises to use his or her education to benefit Hispanic Americans.

The board and advisory committee shall develop criteria for selecting scholarship recipients. The criteria shall assess the student's social and cultural ties to a Hispanic American community within the state. The criteria shall include a priority for upper division or graduate students. It may also include a priority for students majoring in a program in which expertise is needed by the state's Hispanic Americans.

The bill establishes the endowment and trust funds. Upon raising \$50,000 in private donations, matching funds may be requested by the board to be deposited into the endowment fund from the trust fund. No appropriation is requested in this bill. In order for the board to award scholarships, however, funds would need to be appropriated in the state budget bill.