

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1966

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Higher Education, April 3, 1997

Title: An act relating to higher education fees.

Brief Description: Raising the percentage of waivers allowed at some institutions of higher education.

Sponsors: House Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Chandler, Mulliken, Radcliff, Butler, Mason, O'Brien and Morris).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 4/1/97, 4/3/97 [DP-WM].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Wood, Chair; Winsley, Vice Chair; Bauer, Hale, Kohl and Sheldon.

Staff: Jennifer Hanlon (786-7784)

Background: Through approximately 35 different programs, the baccalaureate institutions and community colleges may waive some or all of a student's tuition and fees. There is a statutory limit on the amount of operating fee revenue that each baccalaureate institution and the community colleges as a whole may forego. The waiver cap ranges from a high of 35 percent for community colleges to a low of 6 percent for The Evergreen State College. The revenue limit for other state universities is: 21 percent for the University of Washington; 20 percent for Washington State University; 11 percent for Eastern Washington University; 10 percent for Western Washington University; and 8 percent for Central Washington University. These limits may be revised through statute or through the Biennial Budget Act. There is statutory intent language that suggests that the Legislature will not reduce state support for institutions that do not waive the entire amount of revenue permitted under the cap.

Summary of Bill: The maximum percentage of estimated operating fee revenue that baccalaureate institutions may waive is increased for three institutions. Central Washington University and The Evergreen State College may waive 10 percent of the estimated revenue. Washington State University may waive 21 percent of the estimated revenue. It is the intent of the Legislature that general tax support for these baccalaureate institutions will not increase as a result of the revised revenue limit. For the purpose of estimating tuition and fee revenue, the Legislature may assume that the maximum waiver limit for the three institutions is the waiver limit that was in effect during 1993.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Central Washington University continues to bump up against its waiver cap. At the time the Legislature made waivers permissive, it also built the waiver amount into the base budget. The institutions recognize that fiscal times have changed. The institutions are not asking for more money, just more flexibility. Increasing the waiver limit enables the universities to provide financial assistance to meritorious and middle class students.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Martha Lindley, CWU; Kim Merriman, TESC; Larry Ganders, WSU.