

# COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

*Rep. Don Carlson, Republican Co-Chair; and  
Rep. Phyllis Kenney, Democratic Co-Chair*

## BILL ANALYSIS HB 2809

**Brief Description:** Creating the foster care scholarship program.

**Background:** Foster care homes provide 24-hour care to children of all ages who need temporary, out-of-home placement due to child abuse, neglect, or family conflict. Foster care is viewed as a short-term solution to an emergency situation. On any given day, there are approximately 11,000 children in Washington state foster care. There are 4,164 licensed foster homes providing care.

Foster care in Washington is constantly changing because of the numbers, ages, and problems of children entering foster care. Providing foster children with an opportunity for higher education is viewed as a means to add stability to their lives and break the cycle of child abuse, neglect, or family conflict that created their foster care situation.

**Summary:** The foster care scholarship program is created. The Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) administers the grant program and adopts rules as necessary. The HECB will work with the Department of Social and Health Services and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction to provide information to eligible students. Eligible students may receive grant awards up to the cost of attending college minus tuition, for a maximum of four years.

To be eligible, students must be between 16 and 23 years old, and have been in foster care a minimum of six months since their 14th birthday. Students must also be eligible for financial aid under the state student financial aid program. However, grants awarded under this program will not affect eligibility for state student financial aid. Students must enter a higher education institution within three years of high school graduation and make satisfactory progress toward degree completion. Students cannot pursue a degree in theology.

Grants may be used to attend a public or private, nonprofit institution of higher education in Washington. They can also be used to attend other institutions that are approved by the HECB as meeting equivalent standards of the public or private, nonprofit institutions.

**Appropriation:** An appropriation of \$100,000 for fiscal year ending June 30, 2001 is requested.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

*February 4, 2000*