

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

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

BILL ANALYSIS

HB 2832

Brief Description: Changing eligibility for educational opportunity grants.

Background: The Educational Opportunity Grant program was created in 1990 as part of the branch campus legislation. The Higher Education Coordinating Board recommended that the program be created based on the assumption that the size, and therefore, the construction and operating costs of the proposed branch campuses could be reduced if placebound students were encouraged to enroll at existing colleges and universities and utilize what would otherwise be unused capacity.

To be eligible, students must (1) be residents of Washington, (2) live in an area of the state served by a branch campus, (3) have already completed an associate of arts degree or achieved junior standing, (4) have demonstrated financial need, and (5) not be pursuing a degree in theology or religious studies.

An eligible student may receive up to \$2,500 per academic year. Students can attend any four-year public or private baccalaureate institution that has space, except a branch campus. Students are restricted to upper division, baccalaureate work only.

The Legislature appropriated \$5,840,000 in the 1999-2001 budget solely for the Educational Opportunity Grant program. Approximately 1,000 students receive this grant each year.

The Higher Education Coordinating Board is conducting a comprehensive study of the program that will be completed by July 2000. The board is expected to bring forward recommendations to the Legislature regarding possible changes to the current program based on the study findings.

Summary: The eligibility requirements for the Educational Opportunity Grant are modified.

To be eligible, students must (1) be residents of Washington, (2) have already completed an associate of arts degree or achieved junior standing, (3) have demonstrated financial need, and
(4) not be pursuing a degree in theology or religious studies.

Students are longer required to live in an area of the state served by a branch campus to be eligible.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

*Prepared for the House Higher Education Committee
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