

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
Rep. Don Carlson, Republican Co-Chair; and
Rep. Phyllis Kenney, Democratic Co-Chair

HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS « SSB 5902
Companion Bill - 2SHB 1140

Brief Description: Changing higher education financial aid provisions.

Background: The 1969 Legislature created the State Need Grant program to help financially needy or disadvantaged Washington residents attend college. It is the State's oldest and largest student aid program. The 1998-99 funding level is \$72.4 million which will provide grants to about 50,000 students. The Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) administers the program.

In March 1998, the chairs of the House and Senate Higher Education committees asked the HECB, in consultation with the higher education community, to study the State Need Grant program and to develop recommendations prior to the 1999 session. In October 1998, the HECB adopted a set of recommendations and forwarded them to the Legislature.

Summary: The Higher Education Coordinating Board's recommendations regarding the State Need Grant program are endorsed by the Legislature. These include:

- Reaffirming that the program is to assist low-income, needy and disadvantaged Washington students;
- Establishing a goal that grant amounts be based on public institutions' tuition rates;
- Requiring students to contribute to the cost of their education from sources other than grants;
- Requiring students to document their need for a dependent care allowance; and
- Allowing institutions to continue grants for students whose income increased slightly.

A student's eligibility to receive a state need grant is limited to the equivalent of five years or up to 125 percent of the student's program length. A student is not allowed to earn two associate degrees as a state need grant recipient unless they are earned concurrently.

The board is required to ensure that state financial aid follows the student to the student's choice of institution.

Statutory references to a "student financial aid" program are changed to cite specifically the "state need grant" program.

Office of Program Research
March 29, 1999