

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5552

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Higher Education, February 8, 2001

Title: An act relating to border county higher education opportunities.

Brief Description: Expanding border county higher education opportunities.

Sponsors: Senators Carlson, Kohl-Welles, Hale, B. Sheldon, Hewitt, Sheahan, Shin, Zarelli, Parlette and Horn.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 2/5/01, 2/8/01 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5552 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Kohl-Welles, Chair; Shin, Vice Chair; Carlson, Horn, Jacobsen, McAuliffe, Parlette, Sheahan and B. Sheldon.

Staff: Jean Six (786-7423)

Background: In 1999, the Legislature created the Border County Higher Education Pilot Project administered by the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB). Under the pilot project, residents of Oregon who have resided in Columbia, Multnomah, Clatsop or Washington counties for at least 90 days are eligible to pay resident tuition rates if they enroll in community college programs located in the Washington counties of Clark, Cowlitz, Wahkiakum, or Pacific. Residents of the four Oregon counties who enroll in courses at the Vancouver branch of Washington State University for eight or fewer credits may pay resident tuition rates. Participating Washington institutions are required to give priority program enrollment to Washington residents. In 2000, the pilot project was expanded to include residents of Clackamas County, Oregon.

By November 30, 2001, the HECB must report to the Governor and the Legislature on the results of the pilot project and make recommendations on the extent to which border county tuition policies should be revised or expanded. For each participating institution, the HECB is required to analyze, by program, the impact of the pilot project on enrollment levels, distribution of students by residency, and enrollment capacity.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The project is made permanent and is expanded to allow Washington institutions of higher education located in counties on the Oregon border to implement tuition policies that correspond to Oregon policies. Columbia Basin Community College, Walla Walla Community College, and the Tri-Cities branch of Washington State University are added to the list of participating Washington institutions of higher education. A number of Oregon counties are added to the project.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The original bill was not considered.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Higher education tuition requires a regional approach. Many people living in Washington and working in Oregon pay the Oregon income tax. The border county opportunity project allows citizens in border areas to attend institutions in nearby counties.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Don Carlson, prime sponsor.