

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5304

As Reported by House Committee On: Ways & Means

Title: An act relating to forecasting the caseloads of the state need grant program and the Washington college bound scholarship program.

Brief Description: Requiring forecasting of caseloads of the state need grant program and the Washington college bound scholarship program.

Sponsors: Senators Kilmer, Brown, Rockefeller, Tom, Murray, McAuliffe and Shin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Ways & Means: 3/9/11, 3/30/11 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Bill (As Amended by House)

- Requires the Caseload Forecast Council to provide a forecast of College Bound Scholarship Program recipients who will attend college.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 26 members: Representatives Hunter, Chair; Darneille, Vice Chair; Hasegawa, Vice Chair; Alexander, Ranking Minority Member; Bailey, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Dammeier, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Orcutt, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Carlyle, Chandler, Cody, Dickerson, Haigh, Haler, Hinkle, Hudgins, Hunt, Kagi, Kenney, Ormsby, Parker, Pettigrew, Ross, Seaquist, Springer, Sullivan and Wilcox.

Staff: Trista Zugel (786-7157).

Background:

College Bound Scholarship Program.

The College Bound Scholarship Program provides financial assistance for up to five years to low-income students attending public two- and four-year colleges and universities and

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certain accredited independent colleges, universities, and career schools in Washington. To be eligible, students must qualify for free- or reduced-price lunches and sign a pledge during seventh or eighth grade that includes a commitment to graduate from high school with at least a C average and have no felony convictions. If, at graduation from high school, the student's family income does not exceed 65 percent of the state median family income, the student will receive a scholarship for the amount of tuition and required fees not covered by other forms of assistance, such as the State Need Grant, plus \$500 for books and materials.

Caseload Forecast Council.

The Caseload Forecast Council (Council) is responsible for developing forecasts for the changing caseloads in state entitlement programs. The Council consists of six individuals, two appointed by the Governor and four appointed by the two largest political caucuses in the Senate and the House of Representatives. Caseload forecasts formally adopted by the Council, along with any unofficial forecasts, are submitted to the Governor and the members of the legislative fiscal committees to facilitate budget development.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The Caseload Forecast Council (Council) is required to provide a forecast for the College Bound Scholarship Program. The Council will forecast the number of potential scholarship recipients expected to attend an institution of higher education. The Council must submit this forecast to the Governor and the members of the legislative fiscal committees to facilitate budget development.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The amended bill removes the requirement that the Caseload Forecast Council provide a forecast for the State Need Grant program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) There were 22,000 students who were eligible but did not receive the State Need Grant. The last time the Legislature increased tuition, dollars were put into the State Need Grant to hold students harmless. Apparently that did not hit the mark. The state has made two investments into the College Bound Scholarship Program (College Bound), which is an entitlement. We run the risk of not living up to the bargain.

This would provide decision makers with early and accurate information as a part of the Caseload Forecast Council's development process in the state budget. The first College Bound cohort will begin enrolling in 2012; funding is available for this program for the first two years. This program functions as an entitlement. College Bound is an early commitment of the State Need Grant. Including the programs would improve visibility for the programs and would better equip the Higher Education Coordinating Board and the Legislature to evaluate short- and long-term needs. The importance of this information is underscored by the surge of eligible students in the State Need Grant program. We would like to have the best information.

This type of forecasting will provide some predictability. These are vital programs and need to be raised in the minds of legislators.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Kilmer, prime sponsor; Rachelle Sharpe, Higher Education Coordinating Board; and Julie Garver, The Evergreen State College.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.