

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2801

As Reported by House Committee On:
Higher Education
Appropriations

Title: An act relating to expanding higher education opportunities for certain students.

Brief Description: Expanding higher education opportunities for certain students.

Sponsors: Representatives Hansen, Haler, Hudgins, Stanford, Ortiz-Self, Santos, Pollet, Walkinshaw and Tarleton.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 1/27/16, 2/3/16 [DP];

Appropriations: 2/8/16 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows students who qualify for resident tuition under the "1079" category to be eligible for the College Bound Scholarship program.
- Allows undocumented students receiving Opportunity Scholarship funds to renew their scholarship funds by filing a state financial aid application.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Hansen, Chair; Pollet, Vice Chair; Haler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Frame, Reykdal, Sells and Tarleton.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Zeiger, Ranking Minority Member; Hargrove, Holy, Stambaugh and Van Werven.

Staff: Trudes Tango (786-7384).

Background:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Students seeking federal student financial aid must file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form. Undocumented students are not eligible for federal student financial aid, and therefore generally do not file for FAFSA. However, undocumented students may be eligible for some state financial aid and may qualify as "resident students" for the purposes of paying in-state tuition fees.

For the purposes of in-state tuition, a student is a "resident student" if he or she fits into one of the categories listed in the statute. Under one category, an undocumented person can qualify as a "resident student" if the person:

- completed the full senior year of high school and obtained a high school diploma at a Washington high school, or has received the equivalent of a diploma;
- lived in Washington for at least three years immediately prior to receiving the diploma or its equivalent;
- continuously lived in the state since receiving the diploma or its equivalent; and
- provides the institution an affidavit indicating the person will file an application to become a permanent resident at the earliest opportunity the individual is eligible to do so and is willing to engage in any other activities necessary to acquire citizenship.

Students in the above category are often called "1079ers" (named after the legislation that created the category). Students who are 1079ers, as well as undocumented students who are in "deferred action status" (DACA) under federal immigration rules, are eligible for the State Need Grant.

College Bound Scholarship.

One form of state financial aid is the College Bound Scholarship (CBS) program, which is available to low-income students and students in foster care. Eligible students must sign a pledge during their seventh or eighth grade years. Those who graduate and meet certain conditions will receive financial aid to attend a two- or four-year institution of higher education.

Opportunity Scholarship Program.

Another form of financial aid is the Opportunity Scholarship Program (OSP), which provides scholarships to certain students to earn baccalaureate degrees in high demand programs of study. The OSP is funded through private funds and state matching funds. Students are eligible for the OSP if they meet certain income eligibility requirements and qualify as "resident students" under any of the categories of residency, including the 1079 category. Once awarded, and to the extent funds are available, the OSP is automatically renewed as long as the student files a FAFSA.

Summary of Bill:

College Bound Scholarship.

Students who qualify for resident tuition under the "1079" category are eligible for the CBS, as long as they meet the other requirements for the CBS.

Opportunity Scholarship Program.

Students who are not able to apply for federal student aid using the FAFSA may still have their OSP funds renewed as long as they annually file a state financial aid application approved by the Office of Student Financial Assistance. This allows undocumented students to have their OSP funds renewed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This aligns the CBS program with the State Need Grant. Opening the CBS program to undocumented students offers them a great opportunity and helps remove barriers to education. This helps to ensure that higher education is not just for those who can afford it. All students can apply for the OSP, but to renew their scholarship in their second year, they are required to fill out the federal form. This a simple fix for the OSP.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Guadalupe Rivera, The Evergreen State College; Juliette Schindler Kelly, College Success Foundation; Graciela Nunez, University of Washington; Naria Santa Lucia, Washington State Opportunity Scholarship; and Rachelle Sharp, Washington Student Achievement Council.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 22 members: Representatives Dunshee, Chair; Ormsby, Vice Chair; Parker, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Wilcox, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Cody, Fitzgibbon, Haler, Hansen, Hudgins, S. Hunt, Jinkins, Kagi, Lytton, Pettigrew, Robinson, Sawyer, Senn, Springer, Stokesbary, Sullivan, Tharinger and Walkinshaw.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Chandler, Ranking Minority Member; Buys, Dent, Harris, MacEwen, Magendanz, Schmick, Taylor and Van Werven.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Condotta and Manweller.

Staff: Catrina Lucero (786-7192).

Summary of Recommendation of Committee On Appropriations Compared to Recommendation of Committee On Higher Education:

No new changes were recommended.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The College Bound Scholarship (CBS) program is an early commitment of the State Need Grant program, and the two are connected. This bill improves clarity for students, parents, counselors, and aid administrators. The CBS is a forecasted program. Undocumented students are not tracked in the K-12 system, but students have been encouraged to sign up for the CBS as their status could change. Over 1,000 students have applied for state financial aid using the Washington State Financial Aid form this year. That gives a sense of scale of the potential population. Financial aid supports student success.

The bill allows the Opportunity Scholarship Program (OSP) staff to more easily verify income for current and future recipients. The "deferred action status" and "1079" students are currently eligible to apply for the OSP, but there is a barrier when it comes to renewing the scholarship given that they are not able to fill out a Free Application for Federal Student Aid form.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Rachelle Sharpe, Washington Student Achievement Council; and Juliette Schindler-Kelly, College Success Foundation.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.