

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5289

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Higher Education, January 22, 1996

Title: An act relating to the future teachers conditional scholarship program.

Brief Description: Continuing the future teachers conditional scholarship program.

Sponsors: Senators Bauer, Wood, Sheldon, Kohl and Rasmussen; by request of Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 2/6/95, 2/20/95 [DPS-WM]; 1/22/96 [DPS-WM].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5289 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Bauer, Chair; Kohl, Vice Chair; Drew, McAuliffe, Prince, Rasmussen, Sheldon, West and Wood.

Staff: Jean Six (786-7423)

Background: The Future Teachers Conditional Scholarship Program (FTCSP) was created in 1987 to provide a financial incentive to outstanding individuals to become teachers in Washington's public school system. The program is administered by the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB). The HECB awards conditional scholarships to teacher candidates who have high scholastic achievement and the capability to be role models for students, including minority students. Recipients must be pursuing their initial teaching certificate or an additional endorsement. The term "conditional scholarship" means a loan that is "forgiven" in whole or in part if the recipient renders service as a teacher in Washington's public schools.

The FTCSP has assisted nearly 100 individuals who are now teaching in Washington's public schools. The program awards 30 new conditional scholarships per year and maintains approximately 60 renewals. The program has provided 651 annual scholarships to 283 students. In 1994-95 the program is providing 93 awards valued at \$275,000.

The program has an annual budget of \$300,000, approximately \$21,000 of which is spent for program administration, the remainder (\$279,000) going to conditional scholarships. The FTCSP offers scholarships of up to \$3,000 per year for up to five years, for a maximum of \$15,000 per recipient. Students may use the scholarship to attend teacher training programs in either public or independent institutions of higher education.

The Legislative Budget Committee completed a review of the program and in December of 1993 made two recommendations: (1) the FTCSP should be continued beyond June 30,

1994, in order to attract teacher candidates who demonstrate high scholastic achievement and potential to be role models for students, including minority students; and, (2) eligible teaching experience should be expanded to recognize certificated teaching experience in predominantly publicly funded Head Start, the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program, and contracted alternative school programs.

The 1994 Legislature continued the program until June 30, 1995. The LBC recommendations for program improvements were not adopted.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Future Teachers Conditional Scholarship is continued until June 30, 2002, to serve as an incentive for the best and brightest to become teachers, especially minority students who can act as role models. The "forgiveness" benefit is expanded to include service as a teacher in an "approved education program" in Washington, funded by the state government, federal government, public schools, Indian tribes, or community colleges. Such programs include, but are not limited to, K-12 schools, early childhood education, federal Head Start, English as a second language, tribal schools approved by the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs, and approved schools under state law. Recipients of the "conditional loan" have one year of loan "forgiven" for every two years of service. The board is permitted to cancel a recipient's repayment obligation in cases of total and permanent disability or death.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The "forgiveness" benefit includes service as a teacher in approved private schools.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on July 1, 1995.

Testimony For: The Legislative Budget Committee and HECB both recommend the continuation of the program. This is a highly competitive, merit-based program. It is an effective incentive that encourages the best and brightest to enter the teaching profession. Changing the forgiveness provision is a matter of fairness; for every year of loan, the student will serve for two years. It will provide young native American women with role models; a valuable recruitment tool. It is a matter of fairness that the loan could be forgiven through service in an independent school.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: John Klacik, HECB; Lenora Hall, CWU student, teacher at Tahollah; Stephen Dinger, WA Federation of Independent Schools.