

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 6002

C 36 L 95

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Changing community and technical college tuition refund and fee cancellation provisions.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Senators Bauer, Wood, Rinehart and Kohl; by request of State Board for Community and Technical Colleges).

Senate Committee on Higher Education
House Committee on Higher Education

Background: Most financial aid students, like other students, complete their quarterly classes. However, there are times when students are unable to complete classes for a variety of reasons, and are forced to withdraw before the end of the quarter. The college then determines if a tuition refund is due back to the student, or to the financial aid program if the student is receiving assistance.

In November 1994, the federal government imposed new regulations governing refunds to financial aid students who withdraw before the completion of the quarter. The new regulations require colleges to refund according to the standards in state law or the college's accrediting agency. The Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges, the accrediting agency for the community and technical colleges, does not have a refund policy.

In Washington, each college has policies governing refunds. However, the state Attorney General's office has determined that the current state law does not have a standard for the community and technical colleges, and thus does not meet the refund requirement under federal regulations.

Without legislative action, the colleges would have to provide refunds following the federal "fair and equitable refund policy."

Summary: The governing boards of the community and technical colleges must refund or cancel up to 100 percent, but not less than 80 percent, of the tuition and fees if withdrawal is before the sixth day of instruction for which the tuition and fees are paid. For withdrawal after the sixth day, providing the withdrawal occurs within 20 calendar days of the start of instruction, the refund must be up to 50 percent, but no less than 40 percent. The governing board may adopt a refund policy that meets the minimum requirements of the federal law to maintain eligibility for federal funding of programs.

The governing boards are required to adopt rules for the refund of tuition and fees, and may extend the refund period for students who withdraw for medical reasons or who are called into the military.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	46	0
House	96	1

Effective: April 13, 1995