

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1005

As Reported By House Committee On:
Higher Education

Title: An act relating to a pilot project on resident tuition rates and financial aid portability for students residing in certain border counties in Washington and Oregon.

Brief Description: Creating the border county higher education opportunity pilot project.

Sponsors: Representatives Carlson, Pennington, Ogden, Dunn, Boldt and Mielke.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 1/16/97, 2/7/97 [DPS].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Carlson, Chairman; Radcliff, Vice Chairman; Mason, Ranking Minority Member; Kenney, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Butler; Dunn; O'Brien; Sheahan and Van Luven.

Staff: Suzi Morrissey (786-7120).

Background: With some exceptions, students who move to Washington in order to attend a public college or university are charged a much higher tuition rate than the one levied on Washington residents.

The definitions for resident and nonresident student are determined by law. Resident students who are dependents must be able to prove that their parents or guardians have been domiciled in the state for at least one year before the students enrolled in college. Independent students must meet the same test themselves. Some students who cannot meet this test are defined as Washington residents by law. Students who fall into this category include the spouses and dependents of active duty military personnel stationed in the state and some American Indian students from Idaho, Oregon, and Montana.

In addition, through a variety of tuition waiver programs, some nonresident students are permitted to pay resident tuition rates. These waiver programs are described in law. The programs are permissive, meaning that colleges and universities may

choose whether to grant the tuition waivers to eligible students. Tuition reciprocity programs are an example of waiver programs that permit some nonresident students to pay resident tuition rates. The Higher Education Coordinating Board is responsible for entering reciprocity agreements on the state's behalf. The board has entered agreements with Oregon, Idaho, and British Columbia. Under the agreements, a stipulated number of resident students from those states and province are permitted to pay resident tuition rates at stipulated colleges in Washington. In return, a stipulated number of Washington residents are given the same privilege in colleges in Oregon, Idaho and British Columbia.

Under the 1996-97 reciprocity agreement with Oregon, 313 students from Washington pay resident tuition rates at Portland State University and the Oregon Institute of Technology. An additional 274 Washingtonians pay resident rates at eight community colleges in Oregon. Sixty Oregon students pay resident rates at Washington State University, Western Washington University, and The Evergreen State College. Another 577 Oregonians pay resident rates at six community colleges in Washington.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Border County Higher Education Opportunity Pilot Project is created. Through the pilot project, resident students from Clark County, Washington, and Multnomah County, Oregon, will be able to pay resident tuition at public colleges and universities in either county. Oregon students may take programs offered in Clark County by any Washington public college or university.

In order to pay resident tuition rates, Oregon students must meet their sending state's residency laws and must have been domiciled in Multnomah County for at least 90 days immediately before enrolling in a college or university in Clark County. Washington students participating in the pilot may pay resident tuition rates at public colleges and universities in Clark County if the students or their parents or guardians have been domiciled in Clark County for at least 90 days immediately before enrollment.

Through the pilot project, eligible Washington students may use their state funded financial aid packages while studying in eligible public and independent colleges and universities and private career schools and colleges in Multnomah County. Oregon students, and Washington residents who have not been domiciled in the state for at least one year, will not be eligible to participate in Washington's aid programs.

Washington's participation in the pilot project will be administered by the Higher Education Coordinating Board. The board will determine eligibility criteria for institutional and student participation in the pilot. By November 30, 2000, the board will report to the Governor and appropriate committees of the Legislature on the results of the pilot.

Washington's participation in the pilot project will become operable at the beginning of the academic term following enactment of legislation in Oregon that permits residents of Clark County to pay resident tuition rates in public colleges and universities in Multnomah County.

The act expires on June 30, 2001.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: In order to pay resident tuition rates, Oregon students must have been domiciled for 90 days instead of one year in Multnomah County. Washington students may pay resident tuition in public colleges and universities in Clark County if the students or their parents or guardians have been domiciled in Clark County for 90 days. However, students who have been domiciled in Washington for less than one year are not eligible to participate in the state's financial aid programs. Technical clarifications are included for the definitions of institution of higher education in the State Need Grant and Work Study programs.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 13, 1997.

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

Testimony For: Meeting the postsecondary educational needs of the baby boom echo generation will challenge lawmakers and college officials in many of the western states, including the states of Oregon and Washington. It is time to begin experimenting with new ways to meet college demand. Reexamining reciprocity arrangements, permitting financial aid portability, using distance-learning technologies, and permitting students to study in colleges in the neighboring states are all potential ways to help meet demand without building new colleges and universities. The greater Vancouver and Portland area would be a good place to pilot test some of these ideas. This pilot will also provide an opportunity to test the effects of revising state residency laws. The Columbia River is an artificial barrier bisecting one economic region. Oregon is interested in creating comparable legislation to remove the educational barrier the border poses for students from that economic region.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Carlson, prime sponsor (pro); Susan Patrick, Higher Education Coordinating Board (pro); Linda Calvert, Director of Admissions, Clark College (pro); Al Bulliar, testified on behalf of Oregon's Senator Hartung (pro); and Hal Dengerink, Campus Dean, Washington State University Vancouver Branch (pro).