
Higher Education Committee

SB 5134

Brief Description: Changing border county higher education opportunities.

Sponsors: Senators Carlson, Zarelli, Kohl-Welles, Schmidt, Horn and Shin.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Makes the Border County Pilot Project permanent, where Oregon students living in certain counties pay in-state tuition at designated Washington community colleges and branch campuses.
- Makes the residency requirement in border counties 90 days rather than one year.

Hearing Date: 3/21/03

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

In the late 1990's Oregon's community colleges began charging all Washington students tuition at in-state tuition rates. Most public four-year institutions in Oregon also charge in-state tuition rates for Washington students who are taking eight or fewer credits.

In 1999 the Legislature created the Border County Pilot Project where students who have lived for at least 90 days in the Oregon counties bordering the Vancouver area can pay in-state tuition while attending Clark College, Grays Harbor College, or Lower Columbia Community College. These students can also pay in-state tuition at the Vancouver campus of Washington State University (WSU) if they take eight or fewer credits. Participating institutions are directed to give priority enrollment to Washington residents. The pilot project was scheduled to end by June 30, 2002.

In December 2001 the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) conducted a study of the pilot project and found that an estimated 1,300 Oregon students had used the reduced tuition to attend Washington institutions. The HECB recommended continuing the project.

The 2002 Legislature expanded the scope of the project to include Columbia Basin College, Walla Walla Community College, and the Tri-Cities campus of WSU, as well as the Eastern

Oregon border counties. The residency requirement in border counties was increased to one year, and the pilot project was extended to June 30, 2004. The HECB is directed to make another report by December 1, 2003.

Summary of Bill:

The expiration date of 2004 for the Border County Pilot Project is removed and the project continues indefinitely. For students to participate in the project, the residency requirement in eligible Oregon border counties is 90 days rather than one year.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on March 17, 2003.

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