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SENATE BILL 5670

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State of Washington                      63rd Legislature                      2013 Regular Session

By Senators Ranker, Kohl-Welles, Hasegawa, and Keiser

Read first time 02/07/13. Referred to Committee on Higher Education.

1            AN ACT Relating to extending state need grant eligibility under  
2 certain circumstances; amending RCW 28B.92.060; and creating a new  
3 section.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5            NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 1.** While the legislature finds that, in most  
6 circumstances, need grant eligibility should not extend beyond five  
7 years or one hundred twenty-five percent of the published length of the  
8 program in which the student is enrolled, the legislature also finds  
9 that students should not lose need grant eligibility for taking more  
10 than five years to graduate when they were unable to enroll in the  
11 classes they needed to complete their program as a result of waitlists  
12 and course closures.

13            **Sec. 2.** RCW 28B.92.060 and 2012 c 229 s 558 are each amended to  
14 read as follows:

15            In awarding need grants, the office shall proceed substantially as  
16 follows: PROVIDED, That nothing contained herein shall be construed to  
17 prevent the office, in the exercise of its sound discretion, from

1 following another procedure when the best interest of the program so  
2 dictates:

3 (1) The office shall annually select the financial aid award  
4 recipients from among Washington residents applying for student  
5 financial aid who have been ranked according to:

6 (a) Financial need as determined by the amount of the family  
7 contribution; and

8 (b) Other considerations, such as whether the student is a former  
9 foster youth, or is a placebound student who has completed an associate  
10 of arts or associate of science degree or its equivalent.

11 (2) The financial need of the highest ranked students shall be met  
12 by grants depending upon the evaluation of financial need until the  
13 total allocation has been disbursed. Funds from grants which are  
14 declined, forfeited or otherwise unused shall be reawarded until  
15 disbursed, except that eligible former foster youth shall be assured  
16 receipt of a grant. The office, in consultation with four-year  
17 institutions of higher education, the council, and the state board for  
18 community and technical colleges, shall develop award criteria and  
19 methods of disbursement based on level of need, and not solely rely on  
20 a first-come, first-served basis.

21 (3) A student shall be eligible to receive a state need grant for  
22 up to five years, or the credit or clock hour equivalent of five years,  
23 or up to one hundred twenty-five percent of the published length of  
24 time of the student's program, except as provided in subsection (4) of  
25 this section. A student may not start a new associate degree program  
26 as a state need grant recipient until at least five years have elapsed  
27 since earning an associate degree as a need grant recipient, except  
28 that a student may earn two associate degrees concurrently.  
29 Qualifications for renewal will include maintaining satisfactory  
30 academic progress toward completion of an eligible program as  
31 determined by the office. Should the recipient terminate his or her  
32 enrollment for any reason during the academic year, the unused portion  
33 of the grant shall be returned to the state educational grant fund by  
34 the institution according to the institution's own policy for issuing  
35 refunds, except as provided in RCW 28B.92.070.

36 (4) When determining whether an individual student has met one  
37 hundred twenty-five percent of the published length of time of his or

1 her program, at least one month before the start of a semester or  
2 quarter, an institutional aid administrator must exempt the following:

3 (a) Courses that were taken to replace waitlisted or closed courses  
4 necessary for the student's program over fifteen semester hours or  
5 fifteen credit hours;

6 (b) Remedial coursework up to thirty semester hours or forty-five  
7 quarter hours;

8 (c) Courses for English language learners;

9 (d) Courses taken before a one-time change in programs; and

10 (e) Other exceptional circumstances as documented by the student.

11 (5) In computing financial need, the office shall determine a  
12 maximum student expense budget allowance, not to exceed an amount equal  
13 to the total maximum student expense budget at the public institutions  
14 plus the current average state appropriation per student for operating  
15 expense in the public institutions. Any child support payments  
16 received by students who are parents attending less than half-time  
17 shall not be used in computing financial need.

18 ~~((+5))~~ (6)(a) A student who is enrolled in three to six credit-  
19 bearing quarter credits, or the equivalent semester credits, may  
20 receive a grant for up to one academic year before beginning a program  
21 that leads to a degree or certificate.

22 (b) An eligible student enrolled on a less-than-full-time basis  
23 shall receive a prorated portion of his or her state need grant for any  
24 academic period in which he or she is enrolled on a less-than-full-time  
25 basis, as long as funds are available.

26 (c) An institution of higher education may award a state need grant  
27 to an eligible student enrolled in three to six credit-bearing quarter  
28 credits, or the semester equivalent, on a provisional basis if:

29 (i) The student has not previously received a state need grant from  
30 that institution;

31 (ii) The student completes the required free application for  
32 federal student aid;

33 (iii) The institution has reviewed the student's financial  
34 condition, and the financial condition of the student's family if the  
35 student is a dependent student, and has determined that the student is  
36 likely eligible for a state need grant; and

37 (iv) The student has signed a document attesting to the fact that  
38 the financial information provided on the free application for federal

1 student aid and any additional financial information provided directly  
2 to the institution is accurate and complete, and that the student  
3 agrees to repay the institution for the grant amount if the student  
4 submitted false or incomplete information.

5 ((+6+)) (7) As used in this section, "former foster youth" means a  
6 person who is at least eighteen years of age, but not more than twenty-  
7 four years of age, who was a dependent of the department of social and  
8 health services at the time he or she attained the age of eighteen.

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