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SENATE BILL 6559

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State of Washington

63rd Legislature

2014 Regular Session

By Senator Holmquist Newbry

Read first time 02/10/14. Referred to Committee on Higher Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to establishing a priority for awarding state need  
2 grants to legally present resident students; and amending RCW  
3 28B.92.060.

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

5 **Sec. 1.** RCW 28B.92.060 and 2012 c 229 s 558 are each amended to  
6 read as follows:

7 In awarding need grants, the office shall proceed substantially as  
8 follows: PROVIDED, That nothing contained herein shall be construed to  
9 prevent the office, in the exercise of its sound discretion, from  
10 following another procedure when the best interest of the program so  
11 dictates:

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

15 (a) Priority for state need grant funds shall be given to legally  
16 present resident students as defined in RCW 28B.15.012(2) (a) through  
17 (d) over any other category of student;

18 (b) Financial need as determined by the amount of the family  
19 contribution; and

1        ~~((b))~~ (c) Other considerations, such as whether the student is a  
2 former foster youth, or is a placebound student who has completed an  
3 associate of arts or associate of science degree or its equivalent.

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

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

28        (4) In computing financial need, the office shall determine a  
29 maximum student expense budget allowance, not to exceed an amount equal  
30 to the total maximum student expense budget at the public institutions  
31 plus the current average state appropriation per student for operating  
32 expense in the public institutions. Any child support payments  
33 received by students who are parents attending less than half-time  
34 shall not be used in computing financial need.

35        (5)(a) A student who is enrolled in three to six credit-bearing  
36 quarter credits, or the equivalent semester credits, may receive a  
37 grant for up to one academic year before beginning a program that leads  
38 to a degree or certificate.

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

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

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

10 (ii) The student completes the required free application for  
11 federal student aid;

12 (iii) The institution has reviewed the student's financial  
13 condition, and the financial condition of the student's family if the  
14 student is a dependent student, and has determined that the student is  
15 likely eligible for a state need grant; and

16 (iv) The student has signed a document attesting to the fact that  
17 the financial information provided on the free application for federal  
18 student aid and any additional financial information provided directly  
19 to the institution is accurate and complete, and that the student  
20 agrees to repay the institution for the grant amount if the student  
21 submitted false or incomplete information.

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

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