H-0774.1

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**HOUSE BILL 1238**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**State of Washington 64th Legislature 2015 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Pollet, Haler, Bergquist, Hargrove, Sells, Fitzgibbon, Fey, and Tarleton

AN ACT Relating to affordable tuition planning; amending RCW 28B.77.020; and creating a new section.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The legislature intends that the cost of tuition, where an individual resides in the state, economic status, race or ethnicity, or other status of an individual, should not be a barrier for any resident to obtain a postsecondary certificate or degree from an institution of higher education. The legislature recognizes that for higher education tuition to be affordable for most Washington residents it should not exceed ten percent of the median family income.

(2) The legislature finds that student loan debt has become a lifetime barrier to improving the quality of life for many Washingtonians. The legislature recognizes that federal student loan programs are scheduled to increase interest rates, while average debt is increasing to twenty-eight thousand dollars for a bachelor's degree. If loan interest rates rise to eight percent, this will threaten students' abilities to choose to pursue public service careers with starting salaries in the thirty thousand dollars to fifty thousand dollars range due to debt payments of over five thousand dollars per year.

(3) The legislature finds that financial aid programs, such as the college bound scholarship program and the state need grant program, do not address affordability for many students whose families earn fifty to seventy percent of the median household income and provide no support for those who are truly in the middle of the state's income distribution. The legislature's goal is to use the total cost of attendance as a factor when considering student financial aid policy to accurately represent the true cost of higher education.

(4) The legislature recognizes that in 2002 the state's share of spending relative to tuition at public baccalaureate institutions was seventy-six percent and in 2012 it dropped to thirty-six percent. The legislature finds that this shift has resulted in a reduction in access and opportunity. For example tuition at the University of Washington rose from ten percent of the median household income to over twenty percent in just five years.

(5) The legislature's goal is to make higher education accessible and affordable for all families and it sets a long-term goal for tuition at public institutions of higher education to be no higher than ten percent of the median household income.

**Sec.**  RCW 28B.77.020 and 2013 2nd sp.s. c 25 s 6 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Aligned with the state's biennial budget and policy cycles, the council shall propose educational attainment goals and priorities to meet the state's evolving needs. The council shall identify strategies for meeting the goals and priorities by means of a short-term strategic action plan and a ten-year plan that serves as a roadmap.

(a) The goals must address the needs of Washington residents to reach higher levels of educational attainment and Washington's workforce needs for certificates and degrees in particular fields of study.

(b) The council shall identify the resources it deems appropriate to meet statewide goals and also recognize current state economic conditions and state resources.

(c) In proposing goals, the council shall collaborate with the superintendent of public instruction, the professional educator standards board, the state board of education, the state board for community and technical colleges, the four-year institutions of higher education, independent colleges and degree-granting institutions, certificate-granting institutions, and the workforce training and education coordinating board.

(2) The council shall update the strategic action plan every two years with the first strategic action plan to be submitted to the governor and the legislature by December 1, 2012. The ten-year roadmap must be updated every two years with the first roadmap to be submitted to the governor and the legislature by December 1, 2013. The council must provide regular updates to the joint higher education committee created in RCW 44.04.360 as needed.

(3) In order to develop the ten-year roadmap, the council shall conduct strategic planning in collaboration with agencies and stakeholders and include input from the legislature. The council must also consult with the STEM education innovation alliance established under RCW 28A.188.030 in order to align strategies under the roadmap with the STEM framework for education and accountability developed by the alliance. The roadmap must encompass all sectors of higher education, including secondary to postsecondary transitions. The roadmap must outline strategies that address:

(a) Strategic planning, which includes setting benchmarks and goals for long-term degree production generally and in particular fields of study;

(b) Expanding access, affordability, quality, efficiency, and accountability among the various institutions of higher education;

(c) Meeting affordability and access goals by evaluating and proposing strategies, including increased state support, to return to tuition not exceeding ten percent of the state median household income at institutions of higher education and basing financial aid policies on the total cost of attendance, provided these strategies do not harm institutional quality;

(d) Higher education finance planning and strategic investments including budget recommendations necessary to meet statewide goals;

((~~(d)~~))(e) System design and coordination;

((~~(e)~~))(f) Improving student transitions;

((~~(f)~~))(g) Higher education data and analysis, in collaboration with the education data center, which includes outcomes for recruitment, retention, and success of students;

((~~(g)~~))(h) College and career access preparedness, in collaboration with the office of the superintendent of public instruction and the state board of education;

((~~(h)~~))(i) Expanding participation and success for racial and ethnic minorities in higher education;

((~~(i)~~))(j) Development and expansion of innovations in higher education including innovations to increase attainment of postsecondary certificates, and associate, baccalaureate, graduate, and professional degrees; and innovations to improve precollege education in terms of cost-effectiveness and transitions to college-level education;

((~~(j)~~))(k) Strengthening the education pipeline and degree production in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields, and aligning strategies under the roadmap with the STEM framework for action and accountability developed under RCW 28A.188.030; and

((~~(k)~~))(l) Relevant policy research.

(4) As needed, the council must conduct system reviews consistent with RCW 28B.77.080.

(5) The council shall facilitate the development and expansion of innovative practices within, between, and among the sectors to increase educational attainment and assess the effectiveness of the innovations.

(6) The council shall use the data and analysis produced by, and in consultation with, the education data center created in RCW 43.41.400 in developing policy recommendations and proposing goals. In conducting research and analysis the council at a minimum must:

(a) Identify barriers to increasing educational attainment, evaluate effectiveness of various educational models, identify best practices, and recommend methods to overcome barriers;

(b) Analyze data from multiple sources including data from academic research and from areas and agencies outside of education including but not limited to data from the department of health, the department of corrections, and the department of social and health services to determine best practices to remove barriers and to improve educational attainment;

(c) Assess educational achievement disaggregated by income level, age, gender, race and ethnicity, country of origin, and other relevant demographic groups working with data from the education data center;

(d) Track progress toward meeting the state's goals;

(e) Communicate results and provide access to data analysis to policymakers, the superintendent of public instruction, institutions of higher education, students, and the public; and

(f) Use data from the education data center wherever appropriate to conduct duties in (a) through (e) of this subsection.

(7) The council shall collaborate with the appropriate state agencies and stakeholders, including the state board of education, the office of the superintendent of public instruction, the state board for community and technical colleges, the workforce training and education coordinating board, and the four-year institutions of higher education to improve student transitions and success including but not limited to:

(a) Setting minimum college admission standards for four-year institutions of higher education, including a requirement that coursework in American sign language or an American Indian language satisfies any requirement for instruction in a language other than English that the council or the institutions may establish as a general undergraduate admissions requirement;

(b) Proposing comprehensive policies and programs to encourage students to prepare for, understand how to access, and pursue postsecondary college and career programs, including specific policies and programs for students with disabilities;

(c) Recommending policies that require coordination between or among sectors such as dual high school-college programs, awarding college credit for advanced high school work, and transfer between two and four-year institutions of higher education or between different four-year institutions of higher education; and

(d) Identifying transitions issues and solutions for students, from high school to postsecondary education including community and technical colleges, four-year institutions of higher education, apprenticeships, training, or workplace education; between two-year and four-year institutions of higher education; and from postsecondary education to career. In addressing these issues the council must recognize that these transitions may occur multiple times as students continue their education.

(8) The council directs the work of the office, which includes administration of student financial aid programs under RCW 28B.76.090, including the state need grant and other scholarships, the Washington advanced college tuition payment program, and work-study programs.

(9) The council may administer state and federal grants and programs including but not limited to those programs that provide incentives for improvements related to increased access and success in postsecondary education.

(10) The council shall protect higher education consumers including:

(a) Approving degree-granting postsecondary institutions consistent with existing statutory criteria;

(b) Establishing minimum criteria to assess whether students who attend proprietary institutions of higher education shall be eligible for the state need grant and other forms of state financial aid.

(i) The criteria shall include retention rates, completion rates, loan default rates, and annual tuition increases, among other criteria for students who receive state need grant as in chapter 28B.92 RCW and any other state financial aid.

(ii) The council may remove proprietary institutions of higher education from eligibility for the state need grant or other form of state financial aid if it finds that the institution or college does not meet minimum criteria.

(iii) The council shall report by December 1, 2014, to the joint higher education committee in RCW 44.04.360 on the outcomes of students receiving state need grants, impacts on meeting the state's higher education goals for educational attainment, and options for prioritization of the state need grant and possible consequences of implementing each option. When examining options for prioritizing the state need grant the council shall consider awarding grants based on need rather than date of application and making awards based on other criteria selected by the council.

(11) The council shall adopt residency requirements by rule.

(12) The council shall arbitrate disputes between and among four-year institutions of higher education and the state board for community and technical colleges at the request of one or more of the institutions involved, or at the request of the governor, or from a resolution adopted by the legislature. The decision of the council shall be binding on the participants in the dispute.

(13) The council may solicit, accept, receive, and administer federal funds or private funds, in trust, or otherwise, and contract with foundations or with for-profit or nonprofit organizations to support the purposes and functions of the council.

(14) The council shall represent the broad public interest above the interests of the individual institutions of higher education.

**--- END ---**