
Higher Education Committee

HB 1236

Brief Description: Eliminating the parent or guardian approval requirement for the college bound scholarship pledge.

Sponsors: Representatives Ortiz-Self, Johnson, Santos, Lytton, Moscoso, Pettigrew, Walkinshaw, Kilduff, Sawyer, Reykdal, Bergquist, Fey, Tarleton and Hudgins.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Eliminates the parent or guardian approval requirement for the College Bound Scholarship (CBS) Pledge.
- Adds that a student's parents or guardians, in addition to the student, must be notified of the student's eligibility for the CBS program and the requirements for award of the scholarship.
- Corrects Higher Education Coordinating Board references to the Office of Student Financial Services (Office) references.

Hearing Date: 1/21/15

Staff: Megan Mulvihill (786-7304).

Background:

The Office of Student Financial Assistance.

On July 1, 2012, the Higher Education Coordinating Board was abolished and the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) was created in its place. The Office of Student Financial Assistance (Office) within the WSAC is in charge of administering the College Bound Scholarship (CBS) Program, which includes developing and distributing pledge forms, implementing the application and selection process, and tracking scholarship recipients. The Office also purchases tuition units under the Advanced College Tuition Payment Program, also known as the Guaranteed Education Tuition (GET) Program, for the purpose of the CBS awards. The Office distributes scholarship funds to the institutions of higher education on behalf of the recipients.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

College Bound Scholarship Program.

The CBS Program was established in 2007 to provide guaranteed four-year tuition to students from low-income families. The first CBS awards were granted to the graduating high school class of 2012.

Eligible students for the CBS include those who:

- qualify for free or reduced-price lunches in the seventh grade; or
- are dependent from parents or guardians, or are receiving extended foster care services; and
- in grades seventh through twelve; or
- are between the ages of 18 and 21 and have not graduated from high school.

Beginning in the seventh grade, eligible students are notified of their eligibility and the requirements for award of the scholarship. To be eligible to receive the CBS, a student must sign a pledge during the seventh or eighth grade that includes a commitment to graduate from high school with at least a C average and with no felony convictions. The pledge must be witnessed by a parent or guardian and forwarded to the Office. If the student is a dependent, the student is automatically enrolled without any action necessary by the student or the student's family.

To receive the CBS, the student must graduate with at least a C average from a public high school, approved private high school, or have received home-based instruction. The student cannot have a felony conviction and must be a resident student. Upon graduation, the student's family income will be assessed, and if it does not exceed 65 percent of the state median family income, the student will receive a scholarship.

The CBS recipients that attend public two-year or four-year institutions of higher education receive an award to cover the cost of tuition and fees, minus any state-funded grant, scholarship, or waiver assistance, plus \$500 dollars for books and materials. The student must maintain satisfactory academic progress and may not receive the scholarship for more than four full-time years.

Summary of Bill:

The eligible students' parents or guardians must also be notified of the student's eligibility for the CBS and the requirements for award of the scholarship. An eligible student must sign the pledge during the seventh or eighth grade, but the student no longer needs a parent or guardian to witness the pledge.

All references to the Higher Education Coordinating Board are changed to the Office of Student Financial Services.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested.

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