

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## 2SSB 5800

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
College & Workforce Development

**Title:** An act relating to the helping homeless college students act.

**Brief Description:** Concerning homeless college students.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Randall, Zeiger, Nguyen, Wilson, C., Saldaña, Carlyle, Keiser, Sheldon, Das, Hasegawa and Kuderer).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

College & Workforce Development: 3/19/19, 3/26/19 [DP].

**Brief Summary of Second Substitute Bill**

- Creates pilot programs at the community and technical colleges and the four-year higher education institutions to provide assistance to homeless students and students who were in foster care.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COLLEGE & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Hansen, Chair; Entenman, Vice Chair; Leavitt, Vice Chair; Bergquist, Mead, Paul, Pollet, Ramos, Rude, Sells, Slatter and Sutherland.

**Minority Report:** Without recommendation. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Gildon, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Graham, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Kraft.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Van Werven, Ranking Minority Member.

**Staff:** Megan Mulvihill (786-7304).

**Background:**

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*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.*

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (State Board) is the state agency charged with coordinating and advocating on behalf of the state's 34 community and technical colleges (CTCs). The CTCs are located in 30 college districts across the state. The CTCs have open door policies, and their purpose is to provide comprehensive education and training that meets the needs of the community, basic skills and literacy education, and apprenticeship opportunities.

The Student Achievement Council (Council) is the state agency tasked with providing strategic planning, oversight, and advocacy to support increased student success and higher levels of educational attainment. The Council is responsible for authorizing degree-granting institutions, administering the state's financial aid programs, setting minimum college admission standards, and providing research and policy recommendations.

Homeless often refers to a condition where an individual lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) includes several questions to help postsecondary institutions determine if a student is homeless. The postsecondary institution then needs to verify a student's status, such as through documentation provided by a shelter or through a financial aid administrator.

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### **Summary of Bill:**

Subject to appropriation, the State Board and the Council must both establish pilot programs to provide assistance and accommodations to students experiencing homelessness and to students who were in foster care when they graduated high school. The State Board's pilot program must include four college districts, with two on each side of the Cascade Mountains. The Council's pilot program must include two four-year higher education institutions, one on each side of the Cascade Mountains. The CTCs and institutions chosen to participate must provide accommodations to homeless students and students who were in foster care at high school graduation. The accommodations may include:

- access to laundry facilities, storage, locker rooms and showers, and technology;
- reduced-price meals or meal plans;
- access to short-term housing or housing assistance, especially during seasonal breaks; and
- case management services.

The CTCs and institutions may also establish plans to develop surplus property for affordable housing.

The pilot programs must both report to the Legislature by December 1, 2023. The reports must include data on the number of students experiencing homelessness and those who were in the foster care system at high school graduation, the number of students assisted, and strategies and recommendations on how to better serve these students. The college districts and institutions not participating in the pilot programs are invited and encouraged to voluntarily submit similar data to include in the report. The pilot programs expire July 1, 2023.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) All students should receive the education they deserve. Some students face a barrier in college because they no longer receive the system of support they previously had in K-12. There are many anecdotal stories about the problems homeless students experience, such as the struggle with where to sleep at night, where to shower, and how to be their best when they go to class. This bill provides them a little more support. In addition, the pilot programs collect data so the Legislature can see the needs and find creative solutions. The data collection is very important because there is not accurate data about how many homeless students are on campuses. The problems students experiencing homelessness and previous foster youth are facing need to be understood so these students can be provided the tools to succeed.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Senator Randall, prime sponsor; Arlen Harris, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; and Henry Pollet, Associated Students of Western Washington University.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.