

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1702

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Higher Education & Workforce Development, February 25, 2020

Title: An act relating to informing students of low-cost course materials for community and technical college courses.

Brief Description: Informing students of low-cost course materials for community and technical college courses.

Sponsors: Representatives Van Werven, Leavitt, Kraft, Entenman, Rude, Sutherland, Dye, Gildon, Slatter, Chambers, Graham, Caldier, Eslick, Mosbrucker, Young, Jinkins, Bergquist, Doglio and Pollet.

Brief History: Passed House: 3/04/19, 96-0; 1/22/20, 95-0; 1/22/20, 96-0.

Committee Activity: Higher Education & Workforce Development: 3/14/19, 4/02/19 [DP]; 2/20/20, 2/25/20 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires community and technical colleges to designate during registration whether course materials are less than \$50.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Randall, Chair; Stanford, Vice Chair; Holy, Ranking Member; Brown and Liias.

Staff: Alicia Kinne-Clawson (786-7407)

Background: In 2009, the United States Congress passed the Higher Education Opportunity Act which included provisions related to students choice and knowledge about textbooks. Under the law, institutions of higher education are required to provide lists of assigned textbooks for each course during the registration process.

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.

Washington State law requires affiliated college and university bookstores to disclose information on required course materials at least four weeks prior to the start of the class for which the materials are required. Course material information includes title, author(s), edition, price, and ISBN. In addition, once the CTC Link system is implemented, community and technical colleges are required to include information on a bookstore's website the cost of textbooks and required course materials and the use of open educational resources.

Summary of Bill: Community and technical colleges must indicate to students during registration whether a course uses low-cost required instructional materials. This information may be provided either in the course description or a link to the bookstore's website. A course uses low-cost instructional materials if the entire cost of the required materials equals \$50 or less.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Regular Session 2019): PRO: This bill is one more step in the direction of providing more affordable options to students. Textbooks have increased in cost by 200 percent over the last 20 years. This is far and above the rate of inflation. At the time of registration, if the course has lost cost materials available, there will be notification in the catalogue for students. Washington's community and technical college system supports this legislation for our students. This would allow us to notify which courses have low cost materials which will help low-income students. College student governments have supported the \$50 threshold. Textbook affordability is a huge barrier for students. Textbook costs may make up as much as one-third of a students educational costs in a year. It is important to give students information about which courses offer no and low-cost materials.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Luanne Van Werven, Prime Sponsor; Boyoung Chae, Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; Kristina Pogolian, Student Body President, Tacoma Community College; Christopher Soran, Tacoma Community College.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Regular Session 2020): PRO: This was an idea that was brought to me by CTC students. In my ongoing quest to provide a more affordable college education, I believe this is an important step. The cost of higher education has increased by 200 percent over the last years and I think it is incumbent upon us to do what we can to provide more affordable options. Our students have enjoyed the benefit of knowing which courses offer open education resources and this bill adds to that by disclosing which courses are lowest cost. This will allow our students to make more financially

informed choices which may increase their success. Students believe \$50 is the best threshold for affordability of course materials. The cost of textbooks can be a deciding factor in whether a student can continue in their college courses or needs to take some time off to save. This is important to me because 41 percent of Tacoma Community College students receive need based aid and affording textbooks is a hardship. In my two years I have spent nearly \$1,000 on textbooks. I am using outdated textbooks so that I can afford the materials for class.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Luanne Van Werven, Prime Sponsor; Boyoung Chae, Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; Christie Fierro, Olympic College; Matthew Rounsley, Student, Centralia College; Deanna George, student, Tacoma Community College.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.