

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 5166

C 182 L 19
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Providing religious accommodations for postsecondary students.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Development (originally sponsored by Senators Hasegawa, Carlyle, Frockt, Palumbo and Nguyen).

Senate Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Development
Senate Committee on Ways & Means
House Committee on College & Workforce Development

Background: Higher education institutions are required to develop policies to accommodate student absences for up to two days per academic year for reasons of faith or conscience, or for an organized activity conducted under the auspices of a religious denomination, church, or religious organization. Accommodations are made without adverse impacts to a student's grades. Higher education institutions include the public baccalaureates and the community and technical colleges (CTCs).

Summary: Student absences at a postsecondary educational institution for reasons of faith or conscience, or for an organized activity conducted under the auspices of a religious denomination, church, or religious organization, may be taken after written notice to faculty. Notice must be given within the first two weeks of the beginning of the course and provide specific dates the student requests accommodation. Postsecondary institutions include the public baccalaureates and the CTCs, degree-granting institutions, private vocational schools, beauty and cosmetology schools, and any entity that offers academic credit for apprenticeships.

An institution's policy must require faculty to reasonably accommodate students who, due to observance of religious holidays, expect to be absent or endure a significant hardship during certain days of the course or program. A postsecondary educational institution must publish its policy on its website and reference the policy in course or program syllabi. The notice must also include notification of the institution's grievance procedure.

A student must not be required to pay a fee for seeking reasonable accommodation.

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.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	33	16	
House	64	28	(House amended)
Senate	32	14	(Senate concurred)

Effective: July 28, 2019