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**SENATE BILL 5401**

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**State of Washington 67th Legislature 2021 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Nguyen, Rivers, Cleveland, Das, Dhingra, Gildon, Hasegawa, Holy, Keiser, Kuderer, Liias, Lovelett, Mullet, Saldaña, Stanford, Wellman, and Wilson, C.

AN ACT Relating to degrees in computer science; amending RCW 28B.50.825; and creating a new section.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature finds it essential that Washington students, especially low-income students and students of color, have the necessary credentials to secure the high-demand jobs of the future. Washington is fortunate to be home to a large, and growing, technology sector. The technology sector in Washington currently has more than 24,000 job openings, most of which require a four-year bachelor of science degree in computer science. The legislature also finds that the state imported four times as many computer science graduates than it produced in state. The legislature also finds that the state can do a better job of training Washington residents to secure these living wage jobs of the future. Additionally, of the 1,883 computer science degrees awarded in Washington during the 2018-19 school year, only 3.8 percent were awarded to African American students, 5.6 percent to Hispanic students, and less than 1 percent to Native Americans. The legislature further finds that Washington's competitiveness in the global economy requires the state to ensure companies are able to hire a qualified workforce of Washington residents. To achieve the goals set forth in the workforce education investment act, specifically 70 percent postsecondary credential attainment, the legislature finds that we need to expand access to the high-demand field of computer science, especially to students of color.

**Sec.**  RCW 28B.50.825 and 2016 sp.s. c 33 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Subject to approval by the college board, ((~~Bellevue college is~~)) community colleges and technical colleges are authorized to offer bachelor of science degrees in computer science.

(2) ((~~Bellevue college~~)) Community colleges and technical colleges may develop the curriculum for and design and deliver courses leading to a bachelor of science degree in computer science.

(3) Degree programs developed under this section are subject to approval by the college board under RCW 28B.50.090 before a college may enroll students in upper-division courses.

(4) Prior to approval by the college board, a community college or technical college must submit a proposal for the bachelor of science degree in computer science to the college board. The proposal must:

(a) Demonstrate existing demand from student populations that are low-income or people of color;

(b) Provide for the financial health and sustainability of the program based on the assumption that ongoing funding for this new degree would come through redistribution of the college's current full-time enrollment funding, investments from the workforce education investment act, chapter 406, Laws of 2019, and any endowments or philanthropic grants that may be available; and

(c) Be submitted no earlier than December 1, 2021.

(5) A community college offering a bachelor of science degree in computer science on the effective date of this section is exempt from the requirements of subsection (4) of this section.

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