

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1289

As Reported by House Committee On:
Postsecondary Education & Workforce

Title: An act relating to program administration for the Washington state opportunity scholarship program.

Brief Description: Concerning program administration for the Washington state opportunity scholarship program.

Sponsors: Representatives Reed, Ybarra, Berry, Ortiz-Self, Riccelli, Paul, Reeves, Leavitt and Timmons.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Postsecondary Education & Workforce: 1/25/23, 1/31/23 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Allows the Washington State Opportunity Scholarship Board to establish and contract with private nonprofit corporations for program administration purposes.
- Modifies requirements under the state match.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION & WORKFORCE

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Slatter, Chair; Entenman, Vice Chair; Reed, Vice Chair; Ybarra, Ranking Minority Member; Waters, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Hansen, Jacobsen, Klicker, Leavitt, McEntire, Paul, Pollet, Schmidt and Timmons.

Staff: Saranda Ross (786-7068).

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

Background:

The Washington State Opportunity Scholarship (WSOS) program was established in 2011 to provide scholarships to low- and middle-income resident students pursuing eligible high demand baccalaureate degrees in: science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and health care; and to encourage scholarship recipients to work in the state upon completion of their degrees.

The WSOS Board is staffed by a program administrator under contract with the board and the Washington Student Achievement Council. The program administrator is a private nonprofit. The WSOS is a private-public match program in which the state matches any private donations in order to fund the scholarships. The state match is capped at \$50 million annually.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

A program administrator is one or more private nonprofit corporations. Effective immediately, the WSOS Board may establish and/or contract with one or more private nonprofit corporations to operate as the program administrator to fulfill the duties required by the WSOS program.

The state match, up to a maximum of \$50 million, must be provided annually and is no longer contingent on state tax collections exceeding fiscal year 2008 levels.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

Adds an emergency clause to the section allowing the WSOS Board to establish and/or contract with one or more private nonprofit corporations to operate as the program administrator.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: Section 2 of the bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately. The remainder of the bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Washington's investment in the Washington State Opportunity Scholarship

(WSOS) has allowed thousands of students to achieve their dream education by studying over 123 majors. The WSOS provides critical career pipeline services to the state's most productive industries and helps fill workforce shortages. The WSOS is unique because it provides wraparound services that get students to graduation. Business and philanthropic partners match the scholarship dollar for dollar.

As the program has grown, it has become more difficult to administer. If the current program administrator does not renew its contract, the program might not continue. This bill would allow the WSOS Board to form a nonprofit to administer the WSOS. This flexibility is needed in case a program administrator is not found in time. It is important for legislators to not only begin these critical programs but also see that they're properly continued and implemented.

The WSOS has supported thousands of students, the majority of which are of color, women, or first-generation college students. The state match language in current statute is confusing and this bill would provide clarity by removing that language and provide security by guaranteeing funds.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Julia Reed, prime sponsor; Jessica Monger and Diane Cecchetti, Washington State Opportunity Scholarship; and Dante Cruz.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.