

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5079

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Higher Education & Workforce Development, January 18, 2023

**Title:** An act relating to the date by which tuition operating fees are established.

**Brief Description:** Concerning the date by which tuition operating fees are established.

**Sponsors:** Senators Braun, Lias, Boehnke, Dozier, Holy, King, Mullet, Muzzall, Saldaña, Schoesler, Wagoner and Wellman.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Higher Education & Workforce Development: 1/11/23, 1/18/23 [DP].

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Specifies the date by which the Office of Financial Management determines the maximum rate of tuition fee increases.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Randall, Chair; Nobles, Vice Chair; Holy, Ranking Member; Hawkins and Lias.

**Staff:** Alicia Kinne-Clawson (786-7407)

**Background:** Beginning with the 2017-18 academic year, annual increases in resident undergraduate tuition for all public colleges and universities are limited under law to no more than the average annual percentage growth rate in the median hourly wage for Washington for the previous 14 years as the wage is determined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The Office of Financial Management (OFM) calculates the maximum annual

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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 part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

increase in tuition each year.

**Summary of Bill:** Requires OFM to calculate, and transmit to the institutions of higher education, the maximum annual increase in tuition operating fees for resident undergraduate students by October 1st of each year for the following academic year.

**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:** PRO: In 2015 Washington became the only state to lower our tuition. We tied tuition to median wage long term. But the timing isn't ideal. Schools can't set their tuition at a time early enough that when they send their acceptance letter, so they can tell students what their tuition will be. This bill simply moves the date to October so they can be certain when they send out their acceptance letters. This is a straightforward bill that will help universities be more competitive and help students understand what they're signing up for.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator John Braun, Prime Sponsor; Ruben Flores, Council Of Presidents; Amanda Kost, University of Washington Faculty; Collin Bannister, The Washington Student Association; Puneet Birk, Associated Students of the University of Washington, Bothell.

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