

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5655

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Higher Education & Workforce Development, February 17, 2023
Ways & Means, February 23, 2023

Title: An act relating to creating the Washington achievers grant program.

Brief Description: Creating the Washington achievers grant program.

Sponsors: Senators Torres, Dozier and Wellman.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education & Workforce Development: 2/10/23, 2/17/23 [DP-WM].

Ways & Means: 2/21/23, 2/23/23 [DPS].

Brief Summary of First Substitute Bill

- Creates the Washington Achievers Grant Program to provide state matching grants to increase access to federal TRIO programs at institutions of higher education.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

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

Staff: Alicia Kinne-Clawson (786-7407)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

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.

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5655 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Rolfes, Chair; Robinson, Vice Chair, Operating & Revenue; Mullet, Vice Chair, Capital; Wilson, L., Ranking Member, Operating; Gildon, Assistant Ranking Member, Operating; Schoesler, Ranking Member, Capital; Rivers, Assistant Ranking Member, Capital; Warnick, Assistant Ranking Member, Capital; Billig, Boehnke, Braun, Conway, Dhingra, Hasegawa, Hunt, Keiser, Muzzall, Nguyen, Pedersen, Saldaña, Torres, Van De Wege, Wagoner and Wellman.

Staff: Michele Alishahi (786-7433)

Background: The Federal TRIO Programs (TRIO) are Federal outreach and student services programs designed to identify and provide services for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds. TRIO includes eight programs targeted to serve and assist low-income individuals, first-generation college students, and individuals with disabilities to progress through the academic pipeline from middle school to post-baccalaureate programs.

Summary of Bill (First Substitute): Subject to appropriations, the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) must administer the Washington Achievers Grant Program. The grant program shall provide state matching dollars to expand access for Washington resident students who are currently ineligible to participate in federally funded TRIO programs at public and private colleges and universities.

WSAC must establish a request for proposal process to supply matching grants to public colleges and universities for the purposes of expanding access.

To be eligible to participate in Washington Achiever programs, students must be:

- Washington resident students;
- demonstrate academic need; and
- either be a 1st generation student, have a family income below 150 percent of the federal poverty level, or have a documented disability.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE (First Substitute):

- Modifies the definition of institutions of higher education to include public and private two and four year institutions of higher education.

Appropriation: The bill contains a section or sections to limit implementation to the availability of amounts appropriated for that specific purpose.

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 on Original Bill (Higher Education & Workforce Development): PRO: The purpose of this program is to expand access for Washington resident students who are ineligible to participate in the federally funded TRIO programs at public colleges and universities, such as DACA recipients. Creating the Washington Achievers Grant Program expands the capacity of colleges to provide resources and support to students who are not eligible to participate in federal TRIO programs. The support ranges from academic advising to community building, allowing students to receive high touch services from staff that ensure their success academically, professionally, and personally. These programs are essential to reaching the goal of 70% post-secondary attainment.

Persons Testifying (Higher Education & Workforce Development): PRO: Senator Nikki Torres, Prime Sponsor; Yokiko Hayashi-Saguil, SBCTC.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Higher Education & Workforce Development): No one.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill (Ways & Means): *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: Most students attending independent colleges in Washington are Washingtonians. Federally funded TRIO programs work to identify and provide support to students who have historically been the farthest from opportunity. Constituents encourage a more inclusive definition of institution of higher education so that students attending not-for-profit private colleges could also access this grant program. When students can attend the college or university that meets their learning needs and provides a sense of belonging, they thrive and persist to earn their credentials. Students attending independent colleges in Washington complete their degrees at rates that put out colleges among the nation's leading institutions.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means): PRO: Senator Nikki Torres, Prime Sponsor; Terri Standish-Kuon, Ph.D., Independent Colleges of Washington.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Ways & Means): No one.