

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1870

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Higher Education*

Title: An act relating to higher education.

Brief Description: Providing higher education opportunities for people in economically depressed timber regions.

Sponsor(s): Representatives Jones, Basich, Hargrove, Jacobsen, Riley, Fuhrman, R. Johnson, Wilson, Wineberry, Morris, Miller, Wynne, Wood, D. Sommers, Roland, Brumsickle, Rasmussen, Sprenkle and Orr.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Higher Education, March 4, 1991, DPS.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
HIGHER EDUCATION**

Majority Report: *That Substitute House Bill No. 1870 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.* Signed by 12 members: Representatives Jacobsen, Chair; Ogden, Vice Chair; Wood, Ranking Minority Member; Basich; Dellwo; Fraser; Ludwig; Miller; Prince; Sheldon; Spanel; and Van Loven.

Minority Report: *Without recommendation.* Signed by 1 member: Representative May, Assistant Ranking Minority Member.

Staff: Marilee Scarbrough (786-7196).

Background: Declines in the federal timber supply will have a significant economic impact on the state of Washington. Most of the job losses will occur in rural, timber dependent counties which have not experienced economic growth similar to the metropolitan areas. Generally, the impacted regions of the state do not have the economic diversity of the rest of the state. Furthermore, their isolation from transportation corridors and metropolitan centers reduces the opportunity for diversification. Impacted workers in timber dependent communities are also more likely to be older and have less formal education than other dislocated workers.

Community colleges located in timber dependent communities currently offer training in basic skills, career planning and vocational programs that are beneficial to displaced timber workers. Community colleges also have strong guidance programs to assist in career planning. Those services are currently provided within the enrollment limits of the community college. As the numbers of dislocated timber workers rise, the percentage of those who are unable to enroll in community colleges will also increase. Recent estimates predict a 14 percent unemployment rate in Grays Harbor due to declining timber supply. The projected unemployment rate in Clallam county is 13 percent.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The State Board for Community College Education shall administer a program for dislocated timber workers. The board shall distribute funds to community colleges, appoint an advisory committee, and monitor the program.

The State Board for Community College Education is allocated 500 additional full-time equivalent students per year. The tuition, services and activities fees are waived for dislocated timber workers or their spouses enrolled as one of the additional full-time equivalent students authorized in the legislation. Others in the community may pay tuition and fees for the remaining space available.

The student eligibility criteria is outlined. A timber worker is eligible if, within the past five years, the worker was employed in the timber industry on a full-time basis for at least six months each year, and if loss of employment is due to reduction in work force.

The Higher Education Coordinating Board shall administer a program designed to provide upper division higher education opportunities to dislocated timber workers. The board shall distribute funding for an institution of higher education to provide classes in Clallam county.

The board shall contract with an institution of higher education to provide upper division classes to serve 50 full-time equivalent students per year in Clallam County. The institution shall waive the tuition, service and activities fees for dislocated workers or their spouses, enrolled as one of the additional full-time equivalent students authorized in the legislation. Others in the community may pay tuition and fees for the remaining space available.

Two million nine-hundred and thirty-eight dollars is appropriated to the State Board for Community College Education to carry out the purposes of the act. Five

hundred forty-six thousand dollars is appropriated to the Higher Education Coordinating Board to carry out the purposes of the act.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute bill provides that the State Board for Community College Education is allocated 500 additional full-time equivalent students per year. The state board will distribute the full-time equivalent positions to community colleges which are attended by dislocated timber workers or their spouses. The substitute bill defines dislocated timber worker and timber distressed counties. The substitute clarifies eligibility requirements for a dislocated timber worker. The appropriation to the State Board for Community College Education is increased to \$2,938,000.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Appropriation: Yes.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: Timber workers need continuing education. This legislation would provide re-training opportunities. Grays Harbor and Penninsula community colleges each need at least an additional 150 full-time equivalent student positions. Callam County needs upper division courses. The community is four hours away from the nearest four-year institution. Many individuals on the Penninsula are place bound. There is a need for additional space at the community colleges. The community colleges are already beginning to feel the pressure from dislocated timber workers who wish to enroll. Community colleges are prepared to develop appropriate training programs to meet the needs of dislocated timber workers.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Representative Jones; Steve Rogers, Principal, Port Angeles High School; and Gene Sherman, Grays Harbor Community College.