

SENATE BILL REPORT

2SSB 5022

AS PASSED SENATE, MARCH 14, 1991

Brief Description: Changing the Washington award for excellence in education program.

SPONSORS: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Gaspard, Bailey, Rinehart, von Reichbauer, Murray, Conner and Erwin).

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5022 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Bailey, Chairman; Erwin, Vice Chairman; Murray, Oke, Pelz, Rinehart, A. Smith, and Talmadge.

Staff: Larry Davis (786-7422)

Hearing Dates: January 30, 1991; February 14, 1991

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 5022 be substituted therefor, and the second substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators McDonald, Chairman; Bailey, Bauer, Bluechel, Cantu, Gaspard, Hayner, Johnson, L. Kreidler, Metcalf, Murray, Newhouse, Niemi, Owen, Rinehart, Saling, L. Smith, Talmadge, West, Williams, and Wojahn.

Staff: Bill Freund (786-7715)

Hearing Dates: March 4, 1991; March 5, 1991

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

BACKGROUND:

In 1986, the Washington Award for Excellence in Education Program was created to recognize teachers, principals, superintendents and school boards for their leadership, contributions, and commitment to education. In subsequent years, administrators other than principals and classified employees have been added to the groups who are recognized under the program.

The awards for teachers and principals/administrators include waivers of tuition and fees to attend state colleges and universities. The waivers make the colleges and universities

bear the financial responsibilities of the award, particularly when recipients attend fee-based nontuition classes, typically during the summer. Additionally, there is no date specified in statute for recipients to complete courses, creating administrative difficulties for the office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

SUMMARY:

Teachers and principals or administrators who receive a Washington Award for Excellence in Education may choose one of the following:

- o An academic grant not to exceed the current full-time equivalent resident graduate tuition for courses taken at one of the state's public, research or regional, four-year institutions of higher education;
- o A recognition stipend not to exceed \$1,000; or
- o An educational grant not to exceed \$1,000.

Superintendents who receive a Washington Award for Excellence in Education may choose one of the following:

- o A recognition stipend not to exceed \$1,000; or
- o An educational grant not to exceed \$1,000.

The academic grants, recognition stipends, and educational grants are not considered compensation for salary compliance purposes.

Recipients of a Washington Award for Excellence in Education must notify the Superintendent of Public Instruction within one year of receiving the award whether they want to claim the academic grant, the recognition stipend, or the educational grant.

The total amount of the academic grant shall not exceed the graduate tuition rate for one academic year, and remains at that level for the life of the grant. Recipients have four years to complete courses paid for in full by the academic grant.

Recipients of the award who select the academic grant option may receive 30 clock hours of continuing education. The 30 clock hours is granted only if the academic grant is used for courses related to the recipient's responsibilities or assignments. If the courses are not so related, the recipient does not receive the 30 clock hours of continuing education.

Teachers and principals or administrators may use the academic grant to take courses at a private institution if: 1) the school is located in Washington and is accredited by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges; 2) the academic grant may not exceed, on an annual basis, the yearly, full-time, resident graduate tuition and services and activities

fees in effect at the public research universities; 3) the grant must be matched on at least a dollar-for-dollar basis by the private institution with actual money or by waiver of fees; and 4) the academic grant may not be used toward any theological courses.

Teachers and principals or administrators may use the academic grant to take courses at a public or private institution in another state or country if: 1) the out-of-state institution has an exchange program with a public or private institution in Washington and the program is approved or recognized by the Higher Education Coordinating (HEC) Board; 2) the out-of-state institution meets HEC Board approval criteria; and 3) the award recipient submits in writing to the HEC Board an explanation why the preferred course(s) are not available at an institution in Washington.

The rule-making authority of the HEC Board is clarified. The HEC Board administers the academic grants awarded under the Washington Award for Excellence in Education program. The HEC Board adopts rules to allow recipients to make the transition from using a waiver of tuition and fees to using the academic grant.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction conducts a survey of classified employees to determine their interest in being provided the option of selecting an academic grant, educational grant, or recognition stipend as part of their award. The SPI reports to the Legislature, December 1, 1991, with recommendations and costs.

The bill is made contingent on funding in the budget.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: available

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

TESTIMONY FOR:

Shifting from a tuition waiver to an academic grant will make it easier for recipients to take courses during the summer.

Establishing a clear deadline by which recipients must complete courses will make administration of the program easier.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED (Education): FOR: Marcia Costello, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; Judy Hartmann, Washington Education Association

TESTIFIED (Ways & Means): Senator Gaspard, prime sponsor (pro)

HOUSE AMENDMENT(S):

Virtually all of the House Education Committee amendments are technical and clarifying in nature.

The academic grant, if used for courses taken in an out-of-state or out-of-country institution, may not be used to pay for religious courses (the same restriction which applies to in-state private institutions).