

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1763

As Reported by House Committee On:
Higher Education

Title: An act relating to conditional scholarships for prospective teachers.

Brief Description: Providing for conditional scholarships for prospective teachers.

Sponsors: Representatives Berkey, Jarrett, Kenney, Priest, Fromhold, Chase, Santos, Lovick, Conway, O'Brien, Linville, Hudgins, Talcott and Edwards.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 2/18/03, 2/25/03 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates a conditional scholarship program for potential teachers in math, science, technology, special education, and bilingual education. Consideration is given to bilingual applicants.
- One year of scholarship obligation can be forgiven for two years of teaching in public schools. For teaching in shortage areas, the forgiveness is one for one.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Kenney, Chair; Fromhold, Vice Chair; Cox, Ranking Minority Member; Priest, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Berkey, Boldt, Buck, Chase, Clements, Condotta, Gombosky, Jarrett, Lantz, McCoy and Morrell.

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

Conditional Scholarships: The first conditional teachers' scholarship program was enacted in 1987. Individuals could receive the scholarship for up to five years in the form of a loan. Repayment on the loan was forgiven at a rate of one year of repayment for every two years the recipient taught in a K-12 public school in Washington. The Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) administered the program. The

Legislature provided \$300,000 per year for the program until 1994. The program is still in statute but is inactive due to lack of funding.

In recent years concern about a possible teacher shortage has reignited interest in incentives to encourage individuals to enter the teaching profession. Starting with the 2000 supplemental budget, the Legislature has provided conditional scholarships for classified K-12 employees to become teachers. For 2001-03 the Legislature also provided conditional scholarships to classified K-12 employees enrolled in certain alternative teacher certification programs.

Shortage Areas: In a survey conducted in 2002 by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, school districts reported shortages of teachers in special education, math, sciences, English as a second language, bilingual education, and several other subjects.

Summary of Bill:

The HECB will offer conditional scholarships for full or part-time study that leads to teacher certification or an additional teaching endorsement in one of the following subjects: math, science, technology, special education, or bilingual education. Applicants must be residents of Washington.

When selecting recipients, the HECB will give consideration to bilingual students who demonstrate language proficiency according to a standard established by the HECB.

Scholarships may be granted for up to five years in the form of a loan. One year of loan may be forgiven for two years of teaching in a public school. If a recipient teaches in a geographic or subject matter shortage area, one year of loan is forgiven for every year of teaching. Recipients who fail to meet the condition are required to repay the loan with interest. Repayment terms are determined by the HECB.

The maximum amount of the scholarship is resident undergraduate tuition and fees at the University of Washington.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This bill will help us recruit teachers in specific shortage areas

identified by surveys conducted by the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Community colleges play an important role in preparing future teachers and therefore the colleges support any effort that provides assistance in certifying more teachers. Teachers in these fields are in great demand; bilingual teachers are especially needed due to the demographics of our student population. Student loans are particularly burdensome on new teachers given their salary levels. This approach could help retain those teachers once they are in public schools. A dominant issue is improving the achievement of Latino and other minority students. Increasing the supply of bilingual teachers will help transition non-English speaking students and also improve communication with parents.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: (In support) Representative Berkey, prime sponsor; Loretta Seppanen, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; Amanda Feutz, Washington Student Lobby; Gary King, Washington Education Association; and Antonio Ginatta, Commission on Hispanic Affairs.