

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5134

As Passed House:

April 11, 2003

Title: An act relating to border county higher education opportunities.

Brief Description: Changing border county higher education opportunities.

Sponsors: By Senators Carlson, Zarelli, Kohl-Welles, Schmidt, Horn and Shin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 3/21/03, 3/28/03 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 4/11/03, 88-1.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Makes the Border County Pilot Project permanent, where Oregon students living in certain counties pay in-state tuition at designated Washington community colleges and branch campuses.
- Makes the residency requirement in border counties 90 days rather than one year.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Kenney, Chair; Fromhold, Vice Chair; Cox, Ranking Minority Member; Priest, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Berkey, Condotta, Gombosky, Jarrett, Lantz, McCoy and Morrell.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Clements.

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

In the late 1990s Oregon's community colleges began charging all Washington students tuition at in-state tuition rates. Most public four-year institutions in Oregon also charge in-state tuition rates for Washington students who are taking eight or fewer credits.

In 1999 the Legislature created the Border County Pilot Project where students who have lived for at least 90 days in the Oregon counties bordering the Vancouver area can pay in-state tuition while attending Clark College, Grays Harbor College, or Lower Columbia Community College. These students can also pay in-state tuition at the Vancouver campus of Washington State University (WSU) if they take eight or fewer credits. Participating institutions are directed to give priority enrollment to Washington residents. The pilot project was scheduled to end by June 30, 2002.

In December 2001 the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) conducted a study of the pilot project and found that an estimated 1,300 Oregon students had used the reduced tuition to attend Washington institutions. The HECB recommended continuing the project.

The 2002 Legislature expanded the scope of the pilot project to include Columbia Basin College, Walla Walla Community College, and the Tri-Cities campus of WSU, as well as the Eastern Oregon border counties. The residency requirement in border counties was increased to one year, and the pilot project was extended to June 30, 2004. The HECB is directed to make another report by December 1, 2003.

Summary of Bill:

The expiration date of 2004 for the Border County Pilot Project is removed and the project continues indefinitely. For students to participate in the project, the residency requirement in eligible Oregon border counties is 90 days rather than one year.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: In the long run, the hope is that all of the Western states see the value in allowing reciprocity for students across state borders on a cooperative basis. The community colleges and four-year institutions have been able to develop some unique programs by building cohorts of students from both Washington and Oregon where, without both states, there may have been insufficient enrollment to sustain a program. This is an access issue: the program enables more students to participate in higher education. This has been a pilot and has been reviewed; the Legislature can revisit it any time.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: (In support) Senator Carlson, prime sponsor; Bruce Botka, Higher Education Coordinating Board; Tom Woodnutt, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; and JaneYung Dennie, Washington State University.