
Higher Education Committee

HB 1763

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 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.

Hearing Date: 2/18/03

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 re-ignited 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. Districts' ranking of which subjects were of most concern varied somewhat depending on the geographic location of the district.

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: Requested on February 17, 2003.

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