

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1856

As Reported by House Committee On:
Higher Education

Title: An act relating to child care programs for higher education students.

Brief Description: Regarding child care grants for students at institutions of higher education.

Sponsors: Representatives Roberts, Jarrett, Wallace, Upthegrove, Chase, Barlow, Hasegawa, Lovick, Kenney, Kessler, Kagi, Lantz and Simpson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 2/22/07, 2/27/07 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Replaces a child care grant program available on a competitive basis with a program that awards matching grants to state institutions of higher education.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Wallace, Chair; Sells, Vice Chair; Anderson, Ranking Minority Member; Buri, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Hasegawa, Jarrett, McIntire, Roberts and Sommers.

Staff: Jennifer Thornton (786-7111).

Background:

The Institutional Child Care Grant program was established in 1999 to promote high-quality, accessible, and affordable child care for students attending the state's public four-year colleges and universities. During the 2005-07 biennium, the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) awarded grants totaling \$150,000 to the following public colleges and universities: \$66,000 to Washington State University for affordable evening child care, increased access to both day and evening child care programs for infants and toddlers, and increased efficiency and innovation at the campus child care center; \$35,000 to Western Washington University to provide more affordable child care for low-income families, reduce the annual increase in

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parent fees, produce an outcome-based learning model, and create a daycare newsletter; \$23,636 to Central Washington University to support a portion of the costs associated with hiring an early childhood education specialist and maintaining infant-toddler child care services; and \$25,364 to The Evergreen State College to maintain a sliding fee structure for low-income student parents, train two to three staff members to become Standardized Testing and Reporting trainers, and implement a weekend Native American child care program. The grants do not provide direct child care funding to students.

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) administers the Institutional Child Care Grant program for the community and technical colleges. Grants of up to \$15,000 have been awarded to Big Bend Community College, Highline Community College, Olympic College, and Whatcom Community College.

Summary of Bill:

A competitive grant program is replaced with a program through which the HECB and the SBCTC will award child care grants to state institutions of higher education in an amount matching the amount that the institution's student government association contributes for child care. The funds may only be used for the direct costs of providing child care for the children of students.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The non-traditional student population is growing, and that is expected to continue. As a parent, it is great to have your child on campus. It enables non-traditional students to try to rebuild their lives after life-altering changes. The lack of child care closes the door on dreams.

Student activity fees are paid by the student body, and they decide where to allocate them. Central Washington University (Central) is giving \$310,000 to child care this year. It is the largest line item on the student activity fee budget. However, the need is even greater. There is a long wait list of people seeking child care at Central. As student demographics change, this need will grow even more. This program would provide state funds to match the amount of student funds.

Child care is one of top three barriers for people going back to school and successfully completing college. At the University of Washington slots are on the decline, and the need is

growing. One hundred seventy-two students were served through their voucher program and the waiting list was its longest ever, at 135 people.

(Neutral) Different schools receive different amounts of funding. Western Washington University (Western) receives \$80,000. However, their neighbor, Whatcom Community College, receives little to nothing. It is hard to tell from this bill, what it would provide. It also should have a definition of direct costs. It's unclear if it can be used for student scholarships as it has in the past. If not, Western could actually lose students. This bill has a great intent, but there may be unintended consequences.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Roberts, prime sponsor; Mike Bogatay, Washington Student Lobby; Michelle Smith, Central Washington University and Non-Traditional Student Organization; and Sarah Reyneveld, University of Washington.

(Neutral) Jane Vroman, Western Washington University.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.