

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5101

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Higher Education, January 31, 2007

Title: An act relating to waiving tuition and fees for public and vocational school teachers and other certificated instructional staff.

Brief Description: Expanding higher education tuition waivers to include certain certificated instructional staff.

Sponsors: Senators Hobbs, McAuliffe, Fairley, Weinstein, Marr, Shin, Oemig, Fraser, Kline, Regala, Rasmussen, Tom, Kohl-Welles and Haugen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 1/24/07, 1/31/07 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5101 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Shin, Chair; Kilmer, Vice Chair; Delvin, Ranking Minority Member; Berkey and Schoesler.

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

Background: Washington State institutions of higher education may waive all or a portion of tuition, services, and activity fees for state employees. "State employees" are defined as permanent classified state employees; state, county, or municipal employees governed by the chapter on collective bargaining; permanent classified and exempt paraprofessional employees at technical colleges; and faculty, counselors, librarians, and exempt professional and administrative employees at institutions of higher education.

The employees are enrolled on a space available basis and are charged only \$5 per class as a registration fee. Their enrollment information is not included in official enrollment reports.

Summary of Bill: Teachers and certified instructional staff employed at public common and vocational schools are eligible for a waiver of all or a portion of their tuition, services, and activity fees. This waiver is available only if they are taking the courses for the purposes of meeting their continuing education credits.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY RECOMMENDED SUBSTITUTE AS PASSED COMMITTEE (Higher Education): The tuition and services and fees waivers for teachers

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and instructional staff are limited to those holding or seeking an endorsement or assignment in a state-identified shortage area.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Teachers, especially teachers just getting started in their careers, face many financial hardships. This bill helps some teachers acquire their continuing education credits without having to pay full tuition and fees. This is a good step in recognizing that teachers spend a lot of their time and money trying to improve their teaching skills. Some, but not all, school districts financially support teachers trying to obtain these credits.

CON: There is a concern that this will create some false expectations because there will be a limited number of seats available and the demand is anticipated to be substantial.

OTHER: Teachers will be applying for these waivers during their non-teaching times, evenings and summers, so the demand will be even further concentrated.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Hobbs, prime sponsor; Wendy Rader-Konafalski, Washington Education Association.

CON: Jennifer Wallace, Certificate of Participation.

OTHER: Christopher Thompson, Higher Education Coordinating Board.