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**HOUSE BILL 1812**

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**State of Washington 64th Legislature 2015 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Hansen, Magendanz, Hargrove, Haler, Zeiger, Carlyle, Tharinger, and Pollet

AN ACT Relating to an informational program to increase applications from high-achieving low-income high school students to selective institutions of higher education; adding a new section to chapter 28B.77 RCW; and creating new sections.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature recognizes that each year a large number of high-achieving students from low-income families do not apply to four-year colleges or universities, even though they would have a good chance of acceptance and success. At the same time, high-achieving students from high-income families are very likely to apply to four-year colleges and universities.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28B.77 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The council shall design and implement a program that provides customized information to high-achieving, low-income high school students through the mail and, if the council determines appropriate, electronically, with the purpose of increasing the number of applications from this group of students to four-year institutions of higher education and independent, nonprofit baccalaureate degree-granting institutions in the state.

(2) For the purposes of designing, developing, and implementing the program, the council shall:

(a) Partner with a national entity that offers aptitude tests;

(b) Consult with four-year institutions of higher education and independent, nonprofit baccalaureate degree-granting institutions with physical locations in the state; and

(c) Seek opportunities for shared costs and resources with the entities in (a) and (b) of this subsection and develop agreements with these entities.

(3) The council shall identify high-achieving students from low-income families using methods the council determines to be appropriate, including but not limited to national aptitude test scores, scores on AP tests, and running start and other dual credit programs.

(4) The council shall identify low-income students using methods the council deems appropriate including eligibility for free or reduced-price lunches or self-reported information or participation in federal and state programs for low-income students.

(5) The main component of the program is to send a customized information packet to high-achieving, low-income students. The packet must include at a minimum:

(a) Materials that help students to choose colleges;

(b) An application guidance booklet;

(c) Application fee waivers, if available, for four-year institutions of higher education and independent nonprofit baccalaureate degree-granting institutions in the state that enable students receiving a packet to apply without paying application fees;

(d) Information on college affordability and financial aid that includes information on the net cost of attendance for each four-year institution of higher education and each nonprofit baccalaureate degree-granting institution, and information on merit and need-based aid from federal, state, and institutional sources; and

(e) A personally addressed cover letter signed by the governor and the president of each four-year institution of higher education and nonprofit baccalaureate degree-granting institution in the state.

(6) The council shall implement the program no later than fall 2016, giving consideration to spring mailings in order to capture early action decisions offered by institutions of higher education and nonprofit baccalaureate degree-granting institutions.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  If specific funding for the purposes of this act, referencing this act by bill or chapter number, is not provided by June 30, 2015, in the omnibus appropriations act, this act is null and void.

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