

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1570

As Reported by House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to creating flexibility for the educator retooling conditional scholarship program.

Brief Description: Creating flexibility for the educator retooling conditional scholarship program.

Sponsors: Representatives Gregory, Bergquist, S. Hunt, Reykdal, Kilduff, Ortiz-Self and Pollet; by request of Governor Inslee.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/9/15, 2/19/15 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Changes the name of the Retooling to Teach Mathematics and Sciences Conditional Scholarship Program to the Educator Retooling Conditional Scholarship Program.
- Expands the types of endorsements teachers and certain certificated elementary educators may pursue to qualify for the conditional scholarship program.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 20 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Ortiz-Self, Vice Chair; Reykdal, Vice Chair; Magendanz, Ranking Minority Member; Muri, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Stambaugh, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Caldier, Fagan, Gregory, Griffey, Hargrove, Hayes, S. Hunt, Kilduff, Lytton, McCaslin, Orwall, Pollet and Springer.

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

Staff: Robin Hammond (786-7291) and Cece Clynch (786-7195).

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Background:

A conditional scholarship is a loan that is forgiven in whole or in part in exchange for service as a certificated teacher at a K-12 public school. The state forgives one year of loan obligation for every two years a recipient teaches in a Washington K-12 public school. When a recipient fails to continue with the required course of study or teaching obligation, the recipient must repay the remaining loan principal with interest.

The Retooling to Teach Mathematics and Sciences Conditional Scholarship Program requires a K-12 teacher, or certificated elementary educator who is not employed in a position requiring an elementary education certificate, to pursue an endorsement in math or science to be eligible for the program. The conditional scholarship amount is determined by the Student Achievement Council, may not exceed \$3,000 per year, and is applied to the cost of tuition, fees, and educational expenses. The Washington Professional Educator Standards Board must give preference to scholarship applicants who are eligible veterans or National Guard members.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The Retooling to Teach Mathematics and Sciences Conditional Scholarship Program is renamed the Educator Retooling Conditional Scholarship Program. A K-12 teacher, or certificated elementary educator who is not employed in a position requiring an elementary education certificate, may qualify for the scholarship program by pursuing an endorsement in math, science, special education, bilingual education, English language learner, computer science education, or environmental and sustainability education. The Washington Professional Educator Standards Board must also give preference to scholarship applicants who are teachers seeking additional bilingual education or English language learner endorsements and are assigned to schools required under state or federal accountability measures to implement a plan for improvement, or assigned to schools whose enrollment of English language learner students has increased an average of more than 5 percent per year over the previous three years.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill requires the Washington Professional Educator Standards Board to give preference to scholarship applicants who are teachers seeking additional bilingual education or English language learner endorsements and are assigned to schools required under state or federal accountability measures to implement a plan for improvement, or assigned to schools whose enrollment of English language learner students has increased an average of more than 5 percent per year over the previous three years.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Adding endorsement opportunities to the conditional scholarship program will help resolve current teacher shortages. The bill provides proper tools, preparation, knowledge, and skills for educators in education shortage areas. There is no reason to keep the conditional scholarship program limited to math and science endorsements; it was important when the law was created in 2007, but districts have other needs now. Student demographics and economic opportunities for students have changed drastically. There are legitimate shortages in the areas of special education, bilingual education, English language learner education, computer science education, and environmental and sustainability education.

Expanding access to these endorsements is the right policy and will encourage more students to enter the teaching profession. Adding computer science and environmental endorsements will help prepare students to participate in the twenty-first century. It is an issue of supply and demand. Teachers need to be rapidly retrained and placed in the field. There are capable teachers who may meet demand through the program. There is no fiscal impact because the Alternative Routes to Teaching Program includes appropriations for the conditional scholarship program.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Gregory, prime sponsor; Marcie Maxwell, Office of the Governor; Alan Burke, Washington State School Directors Association; David Brenna, Professional Educator Standards Board; and Steve Dupont, Central Washington University.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.