
Higher Education Committee

SB 5318

Brief Description: Creating the wildlife college student loan program.

Sponsors: Senators Parlette, Bailey and Kohl-Welles.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes the Wildlife College Student Loan Program to be administered by the Student Achievement Council.
- Creates the Wildlife College Student Loan Match Account under the custody of the State Treasurer.

Hearing Date: 3/18/15

Staff: Megan Mulvihill (786-7304).

Background:

Student Achievement Council.

The Student Achievement Council (Council) provides strategic planning, oversight, advocacy, and programs to support increased student success and higher levels of educational attainment in Washington. The Council is tasked with administering state financial aid programs, such as the State Need Grant and College Bound Scholarship, and also administers smaller financial aid programs that target a select workforce, including the following:

- Aerospace Loan program for students enrolled in a certificate program at the Washington Aerospace Training and Research Center and who have declared an intention to work in the aerospace industry;
- Alternative Routes to Teacher Certification Conditional Loan Scholarship program for participants who agree to teach in a specific subject shortage area in Washington K-12 public schools;
- Health Professional Loan Repayment and Conditional Scholarship program for licensed primary care professionals who serve in critical shortage areas; and

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.

- John R. Justice Loan Repayment program for licensed attorneys who commit to working three years in state or local prosecutor offices or in federal, state, local, or tribal public defender offices.

Wildlife Science Programs.

The institutions of higher education in Washington offer various wildlife sciences courses, programs, and degree tracks. Wildlife sciences programs vary in their scope, but may include studies of conservation, biology, ecology, plant sciences, and ecosystem management. Coursework in these programs generally includes lecture classes as well as hands-on lab courses.

Summary of Bill:

The Wildlife College Student Loan Program (Program) is established under the administration of the Council. The Council's administrative duties include the following:

- award loans, to the extent funds have been appropriated, to match an equal public or private grant or donation;
- screen and select eligible students to receive low-interest student loans;
- establish an annual load limit, equal to the cost of attendance, minus any other financial aid received;
- define the terms of loan repayment, including applicable interest rates, fees, and deferments;
- collect and manage repayments from students who do not meet their obligations under the loan;
- solicit and accept grants and donations from public and private sources for the program;
- monitor and ensure compliance with the matching requirements; and
- adopt rules necessary to implement the program.

Students eligible for the program are those who are:

- resident students;
- registered and enrolled in a wildlife science or related science program as a major course of study at an institution of higher education in Washington;
- making satisfactory progress as defined by the student's institution; and
- have declared an intention to work in the wildlife sciences industry.

The Council may make an award to match a public or private grant or donation. The maximum annual state contribution cannot exceed \$100,000 unless specifically authorized in the state budget. Loan awards may not exceed the cost of tuition and fees for the students' program of study.

The Wildlife College Student Loan Match Account is created in the custody of the State Treasurer as a non-appropriated account to be used solely and exclusively for the program. Expenditures from the account may not be used without matching private contributions to the program.

The Program expires June 30, 2025.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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