
Higher Education Committee

SB 5638

Brief Description: Changing state need grant eligibility provisions.

Sponsors: Senators Hasegawa, Roach, Kohl-Welles, Chase, Keiser and McAuliffe.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Modifies the requirements of the State Need Grant program to make the grant available to students enrolled or accepted for enrollment at a qualifying institution of higher education for at least three quarter credits, or the equivalent semester credits.
- Removes a provision relating to an expired pilot program.

Hearing Date: 3/18/15

Staff: Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

Background:

The primary purpose of the State Need Grant (SNG), established in 1969, is to provide an opportunity for low-income, needy, and disadvantaged Washington residents to attend an institution of higher education in the state. Before 1990, the SNG was available only to students enrolled full-time (12 quarter credits, or the equivalent semester credits). In 1990 the Legislature extended the SNG to students enrolled at least half-time (six quarter credits, or the equivalent semester credits).

In 2005 the Legislature directed the former Higher Education Coordinating Board to develop a two-year pilot project to assess the need for and funding requirements that would be necessary to expand student eligibility for the SNG program. Under the pilot project, students enrolled in four or five quarter hours, or equivalent enrollment, were eligible for the SNG as long as they also met the other eligibility criteria for the program. In 2007 the Legislature extended the SNG to students enrolled for at least three quarter credits, or the equivalent semester credits, on a provisional basis. The pilot program expired on June 30, 2011.

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.

Under the 2013-15 Operating Budget, eligibility for the SNG includes students enrolled in three to five quarter credits, or the equivalent semester credits.

Summary of Bill:

Students are eligible for the SNG if they are enrolled or accepted for enrollment at a qualifying institution of higher education for at least three quarter credits, or the equivalent semester credits, rather than on at least a half-time basis.

The expired pilot program allowing less-than-half-time students to be eligible for the SNG program is removed from statute.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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