

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6261

As of January 30, 2018

Title: An act relating to fully funding and expanding eligibility for the state need grant.

Brief Description: Modifying eligibility for state need grants.

Sponsors: Senators Ranker, Wellman, Keiser, McCoy, Kuderer, Hasegawa, Hunt and Conway.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education & Workforce Development: 1/23/18.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Expands eligibility for the State Need Grant (SNG) to 100 percent of Median Family Income (MFI).
- Appropriates \$206 million for the purpose of expanding eligibility to the SNG.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Staff: Alicia Kinne-Clawson (786-7407)

Background: The SNG is the state's largest financial aid program that provides a need-based grant award for students to attend a postsecondary institution. To be eligible for the program, a student must:

- be a Washington State resident;
- attend an eligible institution of higher education and maintain satisfactory academic progress;
- enroll with a minimum of three credits as an undergraduate student;
- be pursuing a first bachelor's degree, a certificate, or a first associate degree in any field excluding theology; and
- not owe repayment to another student aid program.

To receive a grant, the eligible student's family income must be less than 70 percent of the MFI. If the eligible student's family income falls below 50 percent of the state's MFI, the student is eligible to receive the maximum SNG award. If the student's family income is

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between 50 and 70 percent of the state's MFI, the award amount is prorated based on family income. In 2017-18 the state's 70 percent MFI cutoff amount for a family of four was \$62,260.

The student may receive a grant award to attend any eligible postsecondary institution in the state. Currently, there are 66 postsecondary institutions that are authorized to participate in the SNG program. The SNG awards vary based on the type of institution a student chooses to attend.

Summary of Bill: Expands eligibility for the SNG from 70 percent MFI to 100 percent MFI and appropriates up to \$206 million in 2018-19 to the Office of Student Financial Assistance for that purpose.

Appropriation: \$206,000,000.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: We are in strong support of this. We have 9,900 student who are eligible for the state need grant at the University of Washington. One third of them are not receiving the state need grant and are being covered by the university's funds. College affordability is a priority. The SNG is one of the most effective and efficient programs in the nation. This bill helps address some of the affordability challenges facing the middle class. This bill builds on Washington's tuition policy and helps with predictability.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Kevin Ranker, Prime Sponsor; JoAnn Taricani, University of Washington Faculty Senate; Rachelle Sharpe, Washington Student Achievement Council; Paul Francis, Council of Presidents; Ruben Flores, State Board for Community and Tech Colleges; Daniela Suarez, Community College Student Association; Ashleigh DeBuse, Associated Student Body president SPSCC; Ernie Tao, Associated Students of the University of Washington; Harrison Devine, Associated Students of Saint Martin's University.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.