

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2514

As Reported by House Committee On:
College & Workforce Development

Title: An act relating to creating the Washington common application.

Brief Description: Creating the Washington common application.

Sponsors: Representatives Leavitt, Rude, Slatter, Ortiz-Self, Kilduff, Valdez and Goodman; by request of Lieutenant Governor.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

College & Workforce Development: 1/22/20, 2/4/20 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires the public four-year higher education institutions to all enroll in the same preexisting online common application for use in admitting students by the 2022-23 academic year.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COLLEGE & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Hansen, Chair; Entenman, Vice Chair; Leavitt, Vice Chair; Van Werven, Ranking Minority Member; Gildon, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Graham, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Kraft, Mead, Paul, Pollet, Ramos, Rude, Slatter and Sutherland.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Young.

Staff: Megan Mulvihill (786-7304).

Background:

Higher education institutions have authority to determine individual admissions policies and procedures. This includes creation of an application form for admission and setting an application fee. Application fees for prospective undergraduate students range from \$50 to

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\$80 at public higher education institutions (institutions) in Washington. Most institutions have application fee waivers available for certain students. In addition, some institutions are members of college websites that include free, online college planning tools, such as college essay writing prompts, and a common application form. For example, the University of Washington (UW) is a member of Coalition for College and The Evergreen State College (Evergreen) is a member of the Common App.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The public four-year higher education institutions must all enroll in the same preexisting online common application for use in admitting students by the 2022-23 academic year. The preexisting online common application adopted must include more than 500 institutional participants and have an established fee waiver process for low-income students. In addition, an institution is not precluded from adopting a second preexisting online common application, as long as the application includes more than 100 institutional participants and has an established fee waiver process for low-income students. Lastly, the institutions are encouraged to collaborate on standardized fee waiver requirements for low-income students.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill struck the underlying bill and instead of requiring the creation of a Washington unified application, it requires the public four-year institutions to all enroll in the same preexisting online common application.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Preliminary fiscal note available. New fiscal note requested on February 5, 2020.

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) This bill builds off the work the Legislature did last year with House Bill 2158, but it addresses nonfinancial barriers. It is a significant barrier for students to fill out multiple, duplicative applications. First-generation students and students who have been in the workforce who do not have a lot of guidance can struggle with filling out college applications. A person's pursuit of higher education should not stop at the application process because it is too onerous. If a student only fills out one application, but then does not get into that institution, the state should not want the student to stop pursuing higher education. This ensures access in a simple way, and the Legislature should want the process to work for students, not for institutions. Adopting a common application allows for a more diverse applicant pool.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) The cost involved with creating a statewide application is significant. Iowa recently created a statewide application that cost around \$300,000 and only 66 students used it to apply to college. It is not just about an application, but the process. Institutions use a holistic process and multiple admissions persons review applications. It is a rigorous, timely process, and not all of the institutions can operate the same way. The UW receives around 50,000 applications each year, and it takes longer to process those than other universities. Central Washington University (CWU) recently streamlined their application process, and a student can apply on their cell phone within 15 minutes. The CWU also has the ability to track students and send out reminders to those who begin an application but do not finish it. The bill does not allow for the use of different online common applications, despite current practices. The fee waiver processes in place for the online common applications work well.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Leavitt, prime sponsor; and Cyrus Habib, Office of the Lieutenant Governor.

(Other) Paul Francis, Council of Presidents; Steve DuPont, Central Washington University; Joe Dacca, University of Washington; and Juliette Schindler Kelly, College Success Foundation.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.