

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1166

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Higher Education & Workforce Development, March 18, 2021
Ways & Means, April 2, 2021

Title: An act relating to expanding access to the homeless and foster care college students pilot program.

Brief Description: Expanding access to the homeless and foster care college students pilot program.

Sponsors: House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Leavitt, Caldier, Sutherland, Chopp, Lekanoff, Davis, Shewmake, Pollet, Ramos, Callan, Rule, Gregerson, Bateman, Harris-Talley and Johnson, J.).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/26/21, 73-22.

Committee Activity: Higher Education & Workforce Development: 3/11/21, 3/18/21 [DP-WM].

Ways & Means: 3/31/21, 4/02/21 [DP, DNP, w/oRec].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Extends and expands the number of pilot programs at the community and technical colleges and the four-year higher education institutions to provide assistance to homeless students and students who were in foster care.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Randall, Chair; Nobles, Vice Chair; Holy, Ranking Member; Liias.

Staff: Kellee Gunn (786-7429)

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Rolfes, Chair; Frockt, Vice Chair, Capital; Robinson, Vice Chair, Operating & Revenue; Wilson, L., Ranking Member; Brown, Assistant Ranking Member, Operating; Braun, Carlyle, Conway, Darneille, Dhingra, Gildon, Hasegawa, Hunt, Keiser, Liias, Mullet, Muzzall, Pedersen, Rivers, Van De Wege, Warnick and Wellman.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Honeyford, Assistant Ranking Member, Capital; Schoesler, Assistant Ranking Member, Capital.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Wagoner.

Staff: Michele Alishahi (786-7433)

Background: In 2019, the Legislature established four pilot programs at the community and technical colleges (CTCs), two on each side of the Cascade Mountains, and a pilot program each at Eastern Washington University and Western Washington University. The pilot programs were set up to provide certain amenities to students experiencing homelessness and to students who were in foster care when they graduated high school.

Amenities provided in the pilot programs include the following:

- access to laundry facilities, storage, locker rooms and showers, and technology;
- reduced-price meals or meal plans;
- access to short-term housing or housing assistance, especially during seasonal breaks; and
- case management services.

By December 1, 2023, the pilot programs must provide a joint report to the Legislature. The pilot programs expire July 1, 2023.

Summary of Bill: The pilot program is expanded to include:

- two additional programs at the four-year institutions, one on each side of the Cascade Mountains; and
- four additional pilot programs at the CTCs, with no less than four located outside the Puget Sound region.

The pilot program's expiration date is extended to July 1, 2024.

Appropriation: None.

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 (Higher Education & Workforce Development):

PRO: College students are struggling with homelessness, hunger, and other things that threaten their ability to attend and complete college. In a recent Washington State survey, over half of all students experience housing insecurity. There is a need by the students for these amenities, and there is a demand for these trained individuals in the workforce. As a pilot school we took a different approach than other colleges and master leased apartments so students would be able to sign the lease with the school instead of the housing complex. Our school provides social work through our pilot program, which made it so we were able to assist a single mother we would not have otherwise been able to help.

I have been a participant of this program for the last seven months. When COVID hit, finding housing was nearly impossible and the price of housing was out of reach. I work full time as a CNA and did not have the time or funds to find a place and was living in my car. Because of this program, I was able to continue school while working. The approval of this bill would expand supports and makes college accessible to more homeless and foster students. When I graduated high school, I was housing insecure. I had to work three jobs to make ends meet. No one is immune from financial hardship.

The current college pilot sites are providing a variety of supports. Since it began, hundreds of students have been helped. This bill will double the number of pilots, and help more students throughout Washington.

Persons Testifying (Higher Education & Workforce Development): PRO: Nicola Kalderash, Office of Government Relations—UW; Dr. Timothy Stokes, South Puget Sound Community College; Auntoria Peden, student at SPSCC; Sydney Sharp, State Board of Community and Technical Colleges; Jessica Porter, State Board of Community and Technical Colleges; Charles Adkins.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Higher Education & Workforce Development): No one.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Ways & Means): PRO: This bill will have significant impact for students on both sides of the state. Not having space or privacy when you are homeless creates problems for a student's success. When I first moved out of my mom's house, I couldn't find housing. There were many obstacles to finding housing, such as credit checks. Even housing on campus was unaffordable for me. Books, fees, and other unforeseen expenses created huge financial barriers for me to find stable housing.

From February to December 2020, the pilot sites at the CTCs were able to serve hundreds of students. For the first 11 months, the average cost per student was just a little over \$1000.

This was made possible through leveraging current funds by the participating CTCs. The value of the program is evident by student testimony.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means): PRO: Guillermo Rogel, Statewide Poverty Action Network; Cynthia Stewart, League of Women Voters of Washington; Sophie Parker, The Washington Student Association; Da'Mea Birdsong, SBCTC; Jessica Porter, SBCTC; Nicola Kalderash, UW Office Of Government Relations.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Ways & Means): No one.