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**SENATE BILL 5666**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2023 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Randall, Trudeau, Hasegawa, Kuderer, Nguyen, Saldaña, Valdez, and Wellman

AN ACT Relating to a community or technical college student housing pilot program; adding a new section to chapter 28B.50 RCW; creating a new section; and providing an expiration date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature intends to address the critical lack of affordable housing options for students attending institutions of higher education in the state. Surveys conducted by the Washington student achievement council found that 34 percent of Washington college students reported experiencing housing insecurity and 11 percent reported experiencing homelessness in the past year. The legislature recognizes that the high cost of housing is a barrier to access and success for many students, particularly those from low-income backgrounds. The legislature aims to promote equitable access to higher education by funding the research and design of affordable housing programs for students attending higher education institutions in the state. The legislature further recognizes that to strategically eliminate housing insecurity as a barrier for low-income students, resources are needed to properly design affordable housing programs tailored to each institution's unique needs. It is the belief of the legislature that the programs this research produces will have a positive impact on the education and well-being of students in the state and will contribute to the long-term economic and social prosperity of the state as a whole.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28B.50 RCW to read as follows:

(1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the college board shall administer a pilot program to provide planning grants to partnerships between community and technical colleges and public housing authorities or nonprofit community organizations to design and later administer a subsidized housing or housing voucher program for Washington college grant eligible students.

(2) The college board shall select one or more colleges to receive a planning grant to develop a housing program formed in cooperation with a public housing authority or nonprofit community organization. Planning grants shall be one year in duration. Priority shall be given to colleges and public housing authorities or nonprofit community organizations that have previous experience partnering to administer a housing voucher or subsidized housing program. At a minimum, the pilot program must:

(a) Be a partnership between a public housing authority or nonprofit community organization and a community or technical college;

(b) Serve Washington college grant eligible students;

(c) Provide adequate caseworker assistance to students seeking participation in the program;

(d) Provide low or no-barrier housing for previously incarcerated students; and

(e) Prioritize opportunities which provide for a low cost of living.

(3) Upon successful completion of a planning grant, a community or technical college in partnership with a public housing authority or nonprofit community organization may award housing vouchers or subsidized housing to Washington college grant eligible students.

(4) Colleges selected to participate in the pilot program shall submit a joint report to the appropriate committees of the legislature, and in accordance with RCW 43.01.036, by July 1, 2024. The report must include:

(a) Information on which colleges were selected for participation in the pilot program and the public housing authorities or nonprofit community organizations acting as partners;

(b) The design of the housing voucher or subsidized housing program;

(c) The number of students served or expected to be served;

(d) The types of housing offered to students;

(e) The average out-of-pocket cost or anticipated out-of-pocket cost for housing for students participating in the program; and

(f) Lessons learned and recommendations for scaling up similar partnerships to help student access stable and affordable housing.

(5) "Washington college grant eligible" means those students who are eligible for the Washington college grant program under RCW 28B.92.200.

(6) The pilot program expires July 1, 2026.

(7) This section expires January 1, 2027.

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