

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1693

As Reported by House Committee On:
Appropriations

Title: An act relating to expanding the students experiencing homelessness and foster youth pilot program.

Brief Description: Expanding the students experiencing homelessness and foster youth pilot program.

Sponsors: Representatives Lekanoff, Chopp, Reed, Leavitt, Reeves, Eslick, Ortiz-Self, Ramel, Pollet, Macri and Timmons.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Appropriations: 2/9/23, 2/22/23 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Removes the expiration date for the Students Experiencing Homelessness Program.
- Expands the program to all public four-year institutions and community and technical colleges.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 18 members: Representatives Ormsby, Chair; Bergquist, Vice Chair; Gregerson, Vice Chair; Macri, Vice Chair; Berg, Chopp, Davis, Fitzgibbon, Lekanoff, Pollet, Riccelli, Ryu, Senn, Simmons, Slatter, Springer, Stonier and Tharinger.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Stokesbary, Ranking Minority Member; Harris, Rude and Steele.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Chambers, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Corry, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Connors, Couture, Dye and Sandlin.

Staff: Kate Henry (786-7349).

Background:

In 2019 Second Substitute Senate Bill 5800 established pilot programs to provide assistance and accommodations to students experiencing homelessness and to students who were in foster care when they graduated high school.

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (State Board) established pilot programs at four college districts, with two on each side of the Cascade Mountains. The Student Achievement Council (Council) chose Eastern Washington University and Western Washington University to establish pilot programs at four-year institutions.

The participating community and technical colleges (CTCs) and four-year institutions must provide accommodations to homeless students and students who were in foster care at high school graduation. The accommodations may include:

- 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.

The pilot program sites varied in the way accommodations were provided. The participating institutions must provide a joint report to the Legislature by December 1, 2023.

In 2021 Substitute House Bill 1166 expanded the program to include two additional four-year institutions, one on each side of the Cascade Mountains. The pilot was also expanded at CTCs for four additional sites. The total CTC sites must have no less than four locations outside the Puget Sound region. The pilot program's expiration date was extended to July 1, 2024, from July 1, 2023.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The expiration date for the Students Experiencing Homelessness Program is removed. The Student Achievement Council may choose all six public four-year institutions and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges may choose all 34 community and technical colleges to establish a program.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

As compared to the original bill, the substitute bill:

- increases the number of community and technical colleges that may establish a Students Experiencing Homelessness Program from eight to 34;
 - increases the number of public four-year institutions of higher education that may establish a Students Experiencing Homelessness Program from four to six;
 - removes the addition of a tribal college; and
 - eliminates language regarding institutions not selected to participate in the program.
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Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Making the students experiencing homelessness and former foster program permanent serves the students of the future. A critical amendment is needed to allow for all community and technical colleges and all public four-year institutions and tribal institutions to offer students the support they need to succeed. The program addresses a core function to address basic student needs. Housing insecurity is high among students who have experienced homelessness and former foster youth. Nearly 50 percent of students responding to a statewide survey revealed that students have struggled with food, housing, or transportation insecurity. Wraparound services are key to achieve the statewide higher education attainment goal.

The bill has served many students and continues to offer emergency housing, showers, food bank access, and other services. Once a student finds a way to pay for their education the insecurity still exists if they are houseless or housing insecure. Over 2,600 students have used the program to continue their education.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Debra Lekanoff, prime sponsor; Joel Anderson, University of Washington; Naira Gonzales Aranda, Associated Students of Western Washington University; Adán Mendoza-Sandoval, Washington Student Association; Steve DuPont, Central Washington University; Jennifer Dellinger, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; and Ami Magisos, Washington Student Achievement Council.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.