

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1540

As Reported by House Committee On:
Appropriations

Title: An act relating to expanding eligibility for the students experiencing homelessness and foster youth program to an accredited tribal college.

Brief Description: Expanding eligibility for the students experiencing homelessness and foster youth program to an accredited tribal college.

Sponsors: Representatives Timmons, Eslick, Ortiz-Self, Ramel, Reed, Duerr, Kloba, Macri, Callan, Zahn, Ormsby, Pollet, Scott, Doglio, Hill and Simmons; by request of Student Achievement Council.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Appropriations: 1/29/25, 2/10/25 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Expands the Students Experiencing Homelessness program to include a tribal college.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 27 members: Representatives Ormsby, Chair; Gregerson, Vice Chair; Macri, Vice Chair; Connors, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Schmick, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Berg, Bergquist, Burnett, Caldier, Callan, Corry, Cortes, Doglio, Fitzgibbon, Keaton, Leavitt, Lekanoff, Manjarrez, Marshall, Peterson, Pollet, Ryu, Springer, Stonier, Street, Thai and Tharinger.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Couture, Ranking Minority Member; Penner, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Rude.

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

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.

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 established pilot programs at four college districts, with two on each side of the Cascade Mountains. The Student Achievement 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 provided a joint report to the Legislature on December 1, 2023, and annually thereafter.

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 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.

In 2023 Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5702 removed the expiration date for the pilot program and subject to appropriation, all CTCs and public four-year institutions are eligible to participate in the program.

The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) accredits institutions of higher education by applying data and evidence informed standards and processes to support continuous improvements and promote equitable student achievement and success. There is one tribal college in Washington accredited by the NWCCU, the Northwest Indian College, first accredited in 1993.

Summary of Bill:

An accredited tribal college located in Washington may implement a Student Experiencing Homelessness program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Nearly 12,000 students have been provided basic needs support from the Students Experiencing Homelessness program over the last five years. The program helps students persist and complete credentials; 94 percent of students at a public four-year institution and 86 percent of students at a community and technical college finished the academic term in which they received support. The highest rates of food and housing insecurity are being reported by Native American and Alaskan Native students. Adding the Northwest Indian College to the Students Experiencing Homelessness program would allow for their students to be assisted with basic needs.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Joel Anderson, Washington Student Achievement Council.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.