

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1554

As Reported by House Committee On:
Postsecondary Education & Workforce

Title: An act relating to equity in eligibility for the college bound scholarship.

Brief Description: Providing equity in eligibility for the college bound scholarship.

Sponsors: Representatives Timmons, Ortiz-Self, Ramel, Reed and Doglio; by request of State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Postsecondary Education & Workforce: 2/4/25, 2/11/25 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Expands eligibility for the College Bound Scholarship to students who have received a high school equivalency certificate.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION & WORKFORCE

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Paul, Chair; Nance, Vice Chair; Entenman, Leavitt, Pollet, Reed, Salahuddin, Thomas and Timmons.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives McEntire, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Graham, Keaton, Ley, Mendoza, Rude and Schmidt.

Staff: Saranda Ross (786-7068).

Background:

The College Bound Scholarship (CBS) provides recipients who attend two-year or four-year public institutions of higher education an award to cover the cost of tuition and fees, minus

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any state-funded grant, scholarship, or waiver assistance. Recipients attending public institutions also receive \$500 for books and materials. The CBS awards for recipients at private institutions may be covered at public tuition rates.

To receive the CBS, a resident student must graduate from high school with at least a C grade point average, have no felony convictions, and have a family income that does not exceed 65 percent of the state median family income. There is no high school grade point average requirement for students to receive the CBS at a community or technical college. Recipients must maintain satisfactory academic progress, and may not receive the scholarship for more than six full-time years.

Dependent students and students who were dependent but adopted between the ages of 14 to 18 can satisfy the requirement to graduate from high school with at least a C grade point average by instead receiving a high school equivalency certificate.

A dependent student is a student who has been abandoned; is abused or neglected by a person legally responsible for the student's care; has no parent, guardian, or custodian capable of adequately caring for the student; or is receiving extended foster care services.

Summary of Bill:

Eligibility for the CBS is expanded to students who have received a high school equivalency certificate.

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) All other pathways to a secondary credential qualify for CBS, including students who receive their high school diploma from public, private, charter, and tribal-compact schools, as well as students who are homeschooled. This bill expands access to CBS to students who receive their General Educational Development (GED) and also meet the other eligibility requirements. In 2024, 4,001 students earned their GED in the state. If someone otherwise qualifies for CBS having a GED should not hinder access. This bill will enable institutions of higher education to better serve students and help students meet their career and educational goals. This bill also aligns with the intent of the CBS program.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Joe Timmons, prime sponsor; John Axtell; and Troy Goracke, Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.