

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5442

As of February 3, 2025

Title: An act relating to establishing a college promise pilot program.

Brief Description: Establishing a college promise pilot program.

Sponsors: Senators Riccelli, Christian, Holy, Bateman, Chapman, Dhingra, Hasegawa, Lovick, Nobles, Saldaña, Schoesler, Short, Trudeau, Valdez and Warnick.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education & Workforce Development: 2/03/25.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates a College Promise Pilot Program in Eastern Washington for certain recent high school graduates enrolled in eligible postsecondary programs.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Staff: Kellee Gunn (786-7429)

Background: Promise Programs. Promise programs help students pay for all or part of the cost of postsecondary education. Some local and institutional promise programs in Washington include the Seattle Promise, Renton Promise, and Husky Promise. Not all promise programs require a means test.

Median Family Income. According to the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC), the 2024-25 median family income (MFI) in Washington State for a family of four was \$78,500.

Summary of Bill: College Promise Pilot in Eastern Washington. *Promise Program for*

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.

Students. Subject to amounts appropriated, beginning in the 2025-26 academic year, the WSAC shall collaborate with an administrator to establish and administer College Promise Pilot Program. The administrator shall be a registered 501(c)(3) that provides student services in ten counties across Eastern Washington and is headquartered in a county east of the crest of the Cascade Mountains

The administrator must select a minimum of 100 eligible students per year within the ten-county region to receive up to \$5,000 annually for tuition and fees.

To be eligible, a student must have: (1) graduated from a high school within the region, (2) enrolled in an eligible postsecondary program within one year of graduating high school, (3) have a family income that does not exceed 150 percent of the state MFI, and (4) are part of a program that provides mentoring services to students on post high school education.

Funds will be distributed from WSAC to the institution on behalf of the College Promise Pilot Program.

High School Promise Program. Beginning in the 2025-26 academic year, graduating high school students at three high schools may receive full tuition for two years of community college. Within the region they serve, the administrator must select:

- one public high school serving fewer than 1000 students;
- one project-based high school serving fewer than 300 students; and
- one high school serving only juniors and seniors, and serving fewer than 500 students.

Report. The administrator shall submit a report to the WSAC to submit it to the appropriate committees of the Legislature by December 1, 2028. The report must include the following information:

- the number of promise program students that attend a community college and received funds under the programs established in sections 1 and 4 of this act;
- the number of promise program students who complete a degree within two years; and
- the number of promise program students who transfer to a four-year institution of higher education.

Private Matching Funds Required and Account Created. A private match is required on an equal dollar basis for any state funds for the College Promise Pilot Program.

A Match Transfer Account (account) is created. No expenditures from the account may be made except upon receipt of proof, by the WSAC from the program administrator, of private contributions to the College Promise Pilot Program.

Appropriation: The bill contains an appropriation of \$500,000 in fiscal year 2025, and \$1 million in fiscal year 2026.

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: PRO: LaunchNW's work is critical. Investing in a student's success is important and helps the state reach the 70 percent goal. This is a regional approach to help fill funding gaps of high school graduates to access postsecondary education. LaunchNW provides mentorships to high school students in the Spokane region. Many of the students we work with are first generation students. We help students navigate through the process of applying to higher education. This program is worth every dollar. Every student has about a \$2500-\$5000 gap in funding.

Our credit union has worked with LaunchNW on a pilot program in helping students fill out FAFSA. LaunchNW has supported over 150 families in Eastern Washington. LaunchNW has galvanized our community, and this bill will change the trajectory of students. Kids need to do something after high school, otherwise they will get pulled back into the cycle of poverty. Education is going to solve generational poverty. We need a strong workforce to drive our economy.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Marcus Riccelli, Prime Sponsor; Stephen Martinez, Communities for Our Colleges; Ben Small, LaunchNW; Rob Roettger, ESD 101; Traci Lynn McGlathery, Spokane Teachers Credit Union; Kyle Rydell, West Valley School District; Jeffry Philipps, Spokane Business Leader; Rob McCann, Catholic Charities; Kevin Brockbank, Chancellor of Spokane Colleges.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.