

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6314

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As Passed Senate, February 7, 1996

**Title:** An act relating to higher education tuition fees.

**Brief Description:** Requiring higher education tuition rates to increase annually based on the average per capita income in the state.

**Sponsors:** Senators Rinehart, Bauer, Wood, Kohl, Drew and Sheldon.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Higher Education: 1/22/96, 1/23/96 [DP-WM].

Ways & Means: 1/30/96 [DP].

Passed Senate, 2/7/96, 31-17.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Bauer, Chair; Drew, Hale, McAuliffe, Prince, Rasmussen, Sheldon and Wood.

**Staff:** Jean Six (786-7423)

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Rinehart, Chair; Loveland, Vice Chair; Bauer, Drew, Fraser, Hochstatter, Kohl, Long, McDonald, Moyer, Pelz, Sheldon, Snyder, Spanel, Winsley and Wojahn.

**Staff:** Michael Groesch (786-7434)

**Background:** Since 1977, tuition has been a percentage of the cost of instruction. The percentage rates were essentially unchanged from 1981 until 1993, when the Legislature increased the percentages for 1993-94 and again for 1994-95. This led to substantial increases in tuition and increases in tuition's share of the cost of instruction. The 1995 Legislature established tuition increases of 4 percent per year for the 1995-96 and 1996-97 academic years. The 1995 Legislature continued the cost study, though it no longer drives tuition.

**Summary of Bill:** For the 1997-98 academic year and thereafter, tuition is adjusted to reflect the forecasted annual change in state personal per capita income. It is the state policy that general tax support for public higher education also change in accordance with per capita income.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 11, 1996.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Testimony For:** This tuition policy provides both predictability and affordability. The entire Senate agreed to this policy in 1995. It is still the best idea around. Tuition is tied to a predictable economic indicator and allows students to plan for steady, gradual increases. The UW claims the higher education financing system in Washington no longer works.

Stability is needed for both state support and student support. Tuition setting authority remains with the Legislature. Other areas of the general fund budget need to understand the rewards available to all people for an educated citizenry. Again, the bill is right for the state.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Senator Rinehart, prime sponsor; Lambert Vanderwald, UW, WSL; Bob Edie, UW; Kim Merriman, TESC; Bob Hitt, Grays Harbor College trustee; Mary Marci, WWU; Scott Morgan, SBCTC.