

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
Rep. Don Carlson, Republican Co-Chair; and
Rep. Phyllis Kenney, Democratic Co-Chair

BILL ANALYSIS -- HB 2055

Brief Description: Creating the foster care scholarship program.

Background:

Foster care homes provide 24-hour care to children of all ages who need temporary out-of-home placement due to child abuse, neglect or family conflict. Foster care is viewed as a short-term solution to an emergency situation. On any given day, there are approximately 11,000 children in Washington state foster care. There are 4,164 licensed foster homes providing care.

Foster care in Washington is constantly changing because of the numbers, ages and problems of children entering foster care. Providing foster children with an opportunity for higher education is view as a means to add stability to their lives and break the cycle of child abuse, neglect or family conflict that created their foster care situation.

Summary:

Duties of the Higher Education Coordinating Board

The foster care scholarship program is established. The Higher Education Coordinating Board will administer the grants. The grants will not exceed the cost of higher education. The board will work with the Department of Social and Health Services and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction to provide information to eligible students. The Higher Education Coordinating Board will adopt rules to implement the act.

Eligibility Requirements

Recipients must be between 18 and 23 years old, and have been in foster care a minimum of six months since their 15th birthday. Students must also be eligible for financial aid under the state student financial aid program. However, grants awarded under this program will not affect eligibility for state student financial aid. Grants may be used to attend an institution of higher education in Washington.

Students must enter a higher education institution within three years of high school graduation and maintain an above average grade point average. Students remain eligible for four academic years. Students cannot pursue a degree in theology.

Appropriation Request

An appropriation of \$500,000 for each fiscal year is requested for the scholarship program.

Office of Program Research
February 22, 1999