

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2437

As Reported by House Committee On:
Higher Education

Title: An act relating to improving transfer to four-year institutions of higher education.

Brief Description: Improving transfer to four-year institutions of higher education.

Sponsors: Representatives Morrell, Priest, Kenney, O'Brien, Miloscia, Carrell, McCoy, Kirby, Lantz, Conway, Dickerson, Fromhold, Chase, Sullivan, Cody, Hudgins, Haigh, Schual-Berke, Clibborn, Jarrett, Ormsby, Cox, Upthegrove, Anderson, Condotta, Moeller, Rockefeller, Kagi and Tom.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 1/20/04, 1/23/04 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Amended Bill

- Requires public four-year institutions of higher education to treat students transferring from community colleges the same as students transferring from public four-year institutions in their policies regarding transfer of lower-division credits.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Kenney, Chair; Fromhold, Vice Chair; Cox, Ranking Minority Member; Priest, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chase, Condotta, Jarrett, McCoy, Morrell and Ormsby.

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

Each four-year, or baccalaureate, institution of higher education establishes requirements for the number of total credits and upper-division credits required to complete a bachelor's degree, as well as the number of credits that must be earned at the institution granting the degree. Credit requirements can vary by major within an institution. Generally, however, Washington's public baccalaureate institutions require between 48 and 60 upper-division credits for a 180 credit degree and require the final 45 credits to be taken at that institution.

Under the statewide transfer of credit policy and agreement adopted by the Higher Education Coordinating Board in 1992, students who transfer to a baccalaureate institution with 90 or

more community college credits must complete at least 90 additional credits at a baccalaureate institution to earn a bachelor's degree. This requirement does not apply to students transferring credits earned at another baccalaureate institution. The result is that students can potentially transfer up to 135 credits from a baccalaureate institution that can be applied toward a bachelor's degree.

Some institutions permit community college students with more than 90 credits to apply their excess credits toward prerequisites for a major or distribution requirements, but still require students to have an additional 90 credits from a baccalaureate institution. One institution permits an exception to the 90 credit rule for students transferring to a branch campus.

Summary of Amended Bill:

Policies adopted by public four-year institutions of higher education regarding transfer of lower-division credits must treat students transferring from community colleges the same as students transferring from public four-year institutions.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The language about how transfer credits from community colleges versus four-year public institutions are treated is revised. Reference to credits earned at technical colleges is removed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: (In support) As long as community college students take the right types of credits that will transfer, there could be a significant savings of time and money by allowing them to earn more of those credits at the community college. This simply asks for equal treatment of students regardless of where courses are taken. There should not be an artificial transfer limit of 90 credits for community college students.

(With concerns) We should be cautious about encouraging community college students to continue to accumulate credits. There could be unintended consequences if those credits don't apply toward their major or a bachelor's degree. They could end up spending even more time in college taking the right courses. The impact of this should be considered more closely.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Morrell, prime sponsor; Bruce Botka, Higher Education Coordinating Board; Dennis Long, Intercollege Relations Commission; and Loretta Seppanen, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

(With concerns) Terry Teale, Council of Presidents; Jane Sherman, Washington State University; Tim Washburn, University of Washington; and Gail Stygall and Jim Huckabay, Council of Faculty Representatives.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.