

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1191

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Higher Education*

Title: An act relating to higher education.

Brief Description: Providing assistance to single parents in higher education.

Sponsor(s): Representatives Ogden, Jacobsen, Roland, Prentice, Wood, Edmondson, Fraser, Franklin, H. Myers, Ferguson, Winsley, D. Sommers, Paris, Bowman, Forner, Rayburn, Dellwo, Jones, Wynne, R. Johnson, Riley, Scott, Moyer, Phillips, Brekke, Basich, Spanel, Mitchell, Leonard and Anderson.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Higher Education, March 4, 1991, DP.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
HIGHER EDUCATION**

Majority Report: *Do pass.* Signed by 11 members: Representatives Jacobsen, Chair; Ogden, Vice Chair; Wood, Ranking Minority Member; Basich; Dellwo; Fraser; Ludwig; Miller; Sheldon; Spanel; and Van Luven.

Minority Report: *Without recommendation.* Signed by 1 member: Representative May, Assistant Ranking Minority Member.

Staff: Susan Hosch (786-7120).

Background: Washington provides financial assistance to needy students, including single parents, through a variety of programs. These programs attempt to cover each student's educational costs, but are normally based on the needs profile of an average student. If a financial aid package is not sufficient to cover a student's financial needs, the student must request additional funds from the institution's financial aid office. Often, the office does not have enough money to cover those extra expenses, so the student must accept a loan, find additional work, or manage without additional funds.

At most colleges and universities, a basic financial aid award may include a minimal grant for child care. Since the fall of 1990, the state need grant program has provided a child care grant of \$400 per year for full-time students and \$200 per year for part-time students. The federal Pell grant also provides some child care assistance. However, financial aid administrators report that these amounts, while helpful, will cover about one-half the child care costs needed for one child during an academic year. These two financial aid programs are the only programs that recognize the costs associated with child care.

The 2 1/2 percent loan fund is a financial program administered by state supported colleges and universities. Two and one-half percent of tuition collected from all fee paying students is deposited in the fund. Any money in the fund that is not used for loans may be used for locally administered financial aid programs for needy students. First priority in the use of the fund will be given to needy students who have accumulated excessive loan burdens.

Summary of Bill: When determining financial aid awards from the 2 1/2 percent loan fund, institutions of higher education will give second priority to needy single parents. Single parents include participants in the Family Independence Program. The awards are intended to assist single parents with their educational expenses, including expenses associated with child care and transportation.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Many needy single parents in higher education need access to small amounts of financial aid for child care, transportation, and health care emergencies. Often their financial aid packages are unable to meet their needs, so having access to institutional assistance would help them cope with emergencies. This legislation does not create a new program or increase the funding for any existing program. It simply places an institutional priority on helping needy single parents within existing funds. It will increase visibility of the needs of single parents within state colleges and universities. It will also send a message to the institutions that the State places a priority on helping needy single parents to obtain a higher education.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Dr. Elizabeth Keeler, Helping Ourselves Means Education (HOME); Lonnie Johns-Brown, National Association of Social Workers; Ann Simons, Washington Women United; and Dan Lambert, Washington Association of Community College Students.