

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1424

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Higher Education*

Title: An act relating to the African American endowed scholarship program.

Brief Description: Establishing the African American endowed scholarship program.

Sponsor(s): Representatives Franklin, Wineberry, Jacobsen, Cole, Heavey, Paris, Ogden, Moyer, Zellinsky, Nelson, Ferguson, Edmondson, Wood, Wynne, R. Meyers, Locke, Dellwo, R. Fisher, Van Luven, O'Brien, Betrozoff and Anderson.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Higher Education, February 20, 1991, DPS.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
HIGHER EDUCATION**

Majority Report: *That Substitute House Bill No. 1424 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.*
Signed by 13 members: Representatives Jacobsen, Chair; Ogden, Vice Chair; Wood, Ranking Minority Member; May, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Basich; Dellwo; Fraser; Ludwig; Miller; Prince; Sheldon; Spanel; and Van Luven.

Staff: Patricia Cazares (786-7071).

Background:

Population & Enrollment:

According to 1988 population statistics, African Americans comprise approximately 2.8 percent of Washington's population. They are enrolled in higher education at approximately the same rate. African American students, however, participate in greater numbers in lower division courses than in upper division courses. They are also represented in greater numbers in community colleges than in four-year institutions.

Graduation Statistics:

A recent study on the Status of Minority Students and Faculty in Washington's Higher Education System indicates that graduation rates among African American students is low. While, on the average, African American students enroll at approximately 2.6 percent, they are conferred only 1.6 percent of all bachelor's degrees awarded at four-year institutions.

A discrepancy exists between the enrollment and graduation rates among African American students. This phenomenon may otherwise be characterized as a low retention rate. Low retention rates among African American students are attributable to a variety of factors including limited financial resources, inadequate preparation, and difficulty in adjusting to a campus environment.

Summary of Substitute Bill: This bill establishes the African American Endowed Scholarship program. The Higher Education Coordinating Board is responsible for administering the program. Its powers and duties are described to include, but not be limited to, establishing both an advisory and a screening committee; selecting scholarship recipients; and soliciting and accepting grants and donations from public and private sources for the program.

Eligibility is described to include an African American student who is a financially needy, full-time resident student at an institution of higher education in this state, and who promises to use his or her education to benefit other African Americans.

The board and advisory committee shall develop criteria for selecting scholarship recipients. The criteria shall assess the student's social and cultural ties to an African American community within the state. The criteria shall include a priority for upper division or graduate students. It may also include a priority for students majoring in a program in which expertise is needed by the state's African Americans.

The bill establishes the endowment and trust funds. Upon raising \$50,000 in private donations, matching funds may be requested by the board to be deposited into the endowment fund from the trust fund. No appropriation is requested in this bill. In order for the board to award scholarships, however, funds would need to be appropriated in the state budget bill.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: In the substitute bill, race is not defined by the board. A student's eligibility is determined by whether they meet the

specific criteria that is outlined. In addition to the existing criteria, the eligibility criteria will assess the student's social and cultural ties to the African American community within the state.

Fiscal Note: Requested February 11, 1991.

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

Testimony For: A discrepancy currently exists between the enrollment and graduation rates of African American students. The speakers explained that a critical factor affecting African American student participation rates in Washington is their access to financial aid. The creation of the African American Endowed Scholarship program could help eliminate the financial barrier often experienced by African American students. This, in turn, could help produce the needed role models among the state's African American community.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Representative Franklin; and James Kelly, Director of the Commission on African American Affairs.