

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2693

As Reported By House Committee On:
Higher Education

Title: An act relating to degree-granting authority.

Brief Description: Changing provisions relating to higher education degree-granting authority.

Sponsors: Representatives Quall, Jacobsen, Brumsickle, Carlson, Forner, Van Luven, Dyer, Cooke, Brough and Springer.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Higher Education, February 3, 1994, DPS.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 17 members: Representatives Jacobsen, Chair; Quall, Vice Chair; Brumsickle, Ranking Minority Member; Sheahan, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Basich; Carlson; Casada; Finkbeiner; Flemming; Kessler; Mastin; Mielke; Ogden; Orr; Rayburn; Shin and Wood.

Staff: Marilee Scarbrough (786-7196).

Background: Currently, the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTECB) regulates non-degree granting private vocational schools. The private vocational school act allows the WTECB to assist students in evaluating private vocational school programs and in obtaining refunds in the event of the student's withdrawal, school cancellation or school closure.

In 1987, legislation was implemented creating a tuition recovery trust fund for the benefit and protection of private vocational school students. The funds are used to settle claims or pay restitution if a school is found to have engaged in an unfair business practice. The contribution of each school is determined on a pro-rata basis. The WTECB determines the liability of each private vocational school on an incremental scale.

Currently, the tuition recovery trust fund only benefits the non-degree seeking students enrolled in private vocational schools.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The language is clarified that provides for a interagency agreement between the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) and the WTECB to regulate degree and non-degree programs.

A separate account is created in the tuition recovery trust fund. Claims made by students enrolled in degree-granting vocational programs shall be made against the assets in the HECB's account.

The HECB is responsible for maintaining and administering the account. The HECB's operation of the account parallels the WTECB's current operation of the tuition recovery fund. For example, the HECB will determine the amount of liability that can be satisfied by the account, and will adopt by rule a matrix for calculating the deposits into the account required of each degree-granting private vocational school.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: New sections are added describing the administration and operation of the Higher Education Coordinating Board's account for degree-granting vocational schools.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: This bill provides better consumer protection for degree-granting vocational schools. This bill clears up a current loop hole in the law.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Jane Sherman, Higher Education Coordinating Board; Marlene Coplen, Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board; and Linda Broderick, Federation of Private & Vocational Schools (all pro).