

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2490

As Reported By House Committee On:
Higher Education

Title: An act relating to financial aid.

Brief Description: Extending the future teachers' conditional scholarship program.

Sponsors: Representatives Basich, Jacobsen, Kessler, Quall, Orr, Bray, Ogden, Wood, Flemming, Shin, Finkbeiner, Valle, Roland, Talcott, Springer, Cothorn and Mastin.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Higher Education, February 1, 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; Bray; Carlson; Casada; Finkbeiner; Flemming; Kessler; Mastin; Mielke; Ogden; Rayburn; Shin and Wood.

Staff: Susan Hosch (786-7120).

Background: The future teachers' conditional scholarship program was created in 1987. The program is designed to attract into the teaching profession individuals who demonstrate outstanding academic achievement and who are likely to be role models for students, including those of targeted ethnic minorities. The program is administered by the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB).

Through the program, eligible students may receive up to \$3,000 per year for up to five years to attend an accredited college or university in the state of Washington. Participants must be Washington residents who are enrolled or intend to enroll in an approved program that leads to an initial teaching certificate or an additional teaching endorsement. Participants must have at least a 3.3 GPA for high school applicants and a 3.0 GPA for applicants enrolled in an institution of higher education. About half the participants may be needy students.

Participants incur an obligation to repay the scholarship, with interest, unless they teach in Washington's public schools for 10 years.

The annual budget of the program is \$300,000. About 90 students participate each year. These include 30 new students per year, selected from between 600 and 700 new applications. From the inception of the program through June of 1993, 251 students had participated in the program. Of those participants, 38 percent were still in school, 37 percent were teaching, 7 percent were repaying their scholarship, 14 percent were in the grace period permitted after graduation, 2 percent were in deferment, and one student was in default.

After June 30, 1994, no conditional scholarships may be granted unless the program is reenacted by the Legislature. During 1993, the Legislative Budget Committee reviewed the program and recommended that it continue. The committee also recommended that the Legislature expand repayment options to include certificated teaching experience in predominantly publicly-funded Head Start, Early Childhood Education Assistance programs and alternative school programs under contract with local school districts.

North Carolina has a similar program. However, in the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program, participants receive special programs, activities and seminars. These special events are designed both to enrich the students' college educations and to give them a chance to work closely with excellent teachers in the common schools.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Participants in the future teacher conditional scholarship program may repay their service obligations in one of two ways. Participants may teach in the state either in the public schools or in approved education programs. Approved education programs are education programs for knowledge and skills generally learned in preschool through 12th grade. The programs must be offered in Washington and funded predominately by the state or federal government, public schools, or community colleges. The programs may include, but need not be limited to: Head Start, early childhood education and assistance, tribal schools, developmental education, alternative schools, education centers, English as a second language and basic skills programs.

Instead of teaching for 10 years, each participant in the program must meet his or her service obligation by teaching for two years for each year of scholarship received.

Each four-year college and university educating participants in the program is strongly encouraged to provide those participants with a program designed to enrich their college experiences and encourage them to enter the teaching profession. The Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) will consult with the institutions on each enrichment program. When selecting students to participate in the conditional scholarship program, the board may include in its selection criteria an opportunity to participate in a special enrichment program.

While each institution's program may vary, some suggested elements are described. These elements include providing participants with faculty mentors and with special programs, seminars, events and activities. Participants may also receive opportunities that will help them to develop leadership skills. Other recommended components include internships and cooperative ventures with the common schools.

The program expiration date is repealed. Therefore, the board may continue to grant conditional scholarships after June 30, 1994.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Approved education programs must be predominately rather than totally publicly funded. Publicly funded tribal schools and alternative schools are included in the list of approved education programs. A participant may repay his or her service obligation by teaching for two years for each year of scholarship received instead of for a fixed term of 10 years. Some technical corrections were made.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: The program attracts into the teaching profession academically talented students who can serve as good role models for students. Through the program, a number of teachers from minority backgrounds have become teachers in the state's public schools. Unless the program is extended, no scholarships may be granted after June 30 of this year. The Legislative Budget Committee reviewed the program and recommended its continuation. The committee also recommended expanding repayment options to include the type of approved educational programs described in this legislation.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Barbara Theiss, Higher Education Coordinating Board (pro).