

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1966

As Reported By House Committee On:
Higher Education

Title: An act relating to higher education fees.

Brief Description: Raising the total amount of waivers allowed for Central Washington University.

Sponsors: Representatives Chandler, Mulliken, Radcliff, Butler, Mason, O'Brien and Morris.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 2/25/97, 2/27/97 [DPS].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Carlson, Chairman; Radcliff, Vice Chairman; Mason, Ranking Minority Member; Kenney, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Butler; Dunn; O'Brien; Sheahan and Van Luven.

Staff: Suzi Morrissey (786-7120).

Background: Through approximately 35 different programs, the baccalaureate institutions and community colleges may waive some or all of a student's tuition and fees. There is a statutory limit on the amount of operating fee revenue that each baccalaureate institution and the community colleges as a whole may forego. The waiver cap ranges from a high of 35 percent for community colleges to a low of 6 percent for The Evergreen State College. The revenue limit for other state universities is: 21 percent for the University of Washington; 20 percent for Washington State University; 11 percent for Eastern Washington University; 10 percent for Western Washington University; and 8 percent for Central Washington University. These limits may be revised through statute or through the biennial budget act. There is statutory intent language that suggests that the Legislature will not reduce state support for institutions that do not waive the entire amount of revenue permitted under the cap.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The maximum percentage of estimated operating fee revenue that baccalaureate institutions may waive is increased for three institutions. Central Washington University and The Evergreen State College may waive 10 percent of the estimated revenue. Washington State University may waive 21 percent of the estimated revenue. It is the intent of the Legislature that general tax support for these baccalaureate institutions will not increase as a result of the revised revenue limit. For the purpose of estimating tuition and fee revenue, the Legislature may assume that the maximum waiver limit for the three institutions is the waiver limit that was in effect during 1993.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The maximum percentage of operating fees revenue that baccalaureate institutions may waive is revised for The Evergreen State College and Washington State University, as well as Central Washington University. Language was added clarifying legislative intent that general tax support for the three institutions will not be increased as a result of revising the maximum waiver limit.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 18, 1997.

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

Testimony For: The statutory waiver limits for Central Washington University and The Evergreen State College are the lowest in the higher education system. Both institutions would like to have the authority to provide additional waivers to needy students and students with other special circumstances. The limits proposed in this legislation will put them at about the same percentage with the other regional baccalaureate institutions. Washington State University is requesting an increase of 1 percent in its waiver limit. The increase will permit the university to waive the same revenue percentage as the University of Washington is currently permitted to waive. The three institutions are willing to accept a condition that ensures that no state general fund monies will be used to make up revenue losses resulting from the increased waiver capacity.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Martha Lindley, Central Washington University (pro); James Pappas, Central Washington University (pro); Larry Ganders, Washington State University (pro); and Kim Merriman, The Evergreen State College (pro).