

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 2373

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Higher Education, February 26, 1998
Ways & Means, March 2, 1998

Title: An act relating to a pilot project on resident tuition rates and financial aid portability for students residing in certain border counties.

Brief Description: Creating the border county higher education opportunity pilot project.

Sponsors: House Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Carlson, Kenney, O'Brien, Anderson and Mason).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 2/23/98, 2/26/98 [DP-WM].
Ways & Means: 2/27/98, 3/2/98 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Wood, Chair; Winsley, Vice Chair; Bauer, Hale, Kohl, Patterson, Prince, B. Sheldon and West.

Staff: Jean Six (786-7423)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators West, Chair; Deccio, Vice Chair; Strannigan, Vice Chair; Bauer, Fraser, Hochstatter, Kohl, Long, Loveland, McDonald, Roach, Rossi, B. Sheldon, Snyder, Spanel, Swecker, Thibaudeau, Winsley and Zarelli.

Staff: Michael Groesch (786-7434)

Background: With some exceptions, students who move to Washington or commute from a border state, in order to attend a public college or university, are charged a much higher tuition rate than the one levied on Washington residents.

The definitions for resident and nonresident students are determined by law. Resident students who are dependents must be able to prove that their parents or guardians have been domiciled in the state for at least one year before the students enrolled in college. Independent students must meet the same test themselves. Some exceptions to these requirements are defined as Washington residents by law, such as the spouses and dependents of active duty military personnel stationed in the state and some American Indian students from Idaho, Oregon, and Montana.

In addition, through a variety of tuition waiver programs, some nonresident students are permitted to pay resident tuition rates. These waiver programs are described in law. The programs are permissive, meaning that colleges and universities may choose whether to grant the tuition waivers to eligible students. Tuition reciprocity programs are an example of waiver programs that permit some nonresident students to pay resident tuition rates. The Higher Education Coordinating Board is responsible for entering reciprocity agreements on the state's behalf. The board has entered agreements with Oregon, Idaho, and British Columbia. Under the agreements, a stipulated number of resident students from those states and province are permitted to pay resident tuition rates at stipulated colleges in Washington. In return, a stipulated number of Washington residents are given the same privilege in colleges in Oregon, Idaho and British Columbia.

Under the 1996-97 reciprocity agreement with Oregon, 313 students from Washington pay resident tuition rates at Portland State University and the Oregon Institute of Technology. An additional 274 Washingtonians pay resident rates at eight community colleges in Oregon. Sixty Oregon students pay resident rates at Washington State University, Western Washington University, and The Evergreen State College. Another 577 Oregonians pay resident rates at six community colleges in Washington.

The state of Oregon has recently made tuition policy changes that affect students living in the border counties of Washington. Nonresident students may enroll at Portland State University for eight credits or less and pay resident student rates. Also, Oregon enacted legislation in 1997 to begin providing to its community colleges the same level of state funding for students residing in bordering states as students residing in Oregon.

Summary of Amended Bill: The border county higher education opportunity pilot project is created. Under the pilot project, Lower Columbia Community College and Clark Community College, located in the Washington border counties of Cowlitz and Clark, may enroll students who reside in the bordering Oregon counties of Columbia and Multnomah at resident tuition rates. The Vancouver branch of Washington State University may enroll students who reside in the bordering Oregon counties of Columbia and Multnomah for eight or less credits at resident tuition rates. In order to qualify for the resident rates at the community colleges, the students must have resided in the bordering Oregon counties for at least 90 days immediately before enrolling.

Washington's participation in the pilot project is administered by the Higher Education Coordinating Board. By November 30, 2001, the board must report to the Governor and Legislature on the results of the pilot.

The act expires on June 30, 2002.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: All references to financial aid are removed from the bill. The striking amendment clarifies that Oregon participants in the pilot program will still be treated as nonresident students for purposes of calculating state support for students.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For (Higher Education): HECB monitoring will let us know how many students take advantage of the reciprocity arrangements and portability of financial aid. Expansion of EOG helps placebound students to attend a branch campus. Just because the 2020 Commission has been created doesn't mean all higher education decisions ought to wait. Maybe Idaho will eventually reconsider the option.

This pilot project allows us to operate regionally. We would like to develop more collaborative programs between PSU and WSU-Vancouver. The CC presidents are also in support. This is good for students.

Testimony Against (Higher Education): None.

Testified (Higher Education): Rep. Don Carlson, prime sponsor; Hal Dengerink, Dean, WSU Vancouver; Rhonda Coats, SBCTC.

Testimony For (Ways & Means): The revenue lost due to lower out-of-state tuition rates will be offset by an increased number of students. The program provides increased higher education opportunity for students.

Testimony Against (Ways & Means): None.

Testified (Ways & Means): Cindy Hough, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.