

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 2832

As of February 15, 2000

Title: An act relating to eligibility for educational opportunity grants.

Brief Description: Changing eligibility for educational opportunity grants.

Sponsors: Representatives McMorris, Carlson and Kenney.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 2/21/2000.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Staff: William Bridges (786-7424)

Background: "Placebound" residents are persons who are unable to relocate to complete a college program. When the Legislature created the branch campuses in 1990, there were concerns that placebound residents would only attend the new branch campuses instead of other colleges in the state. Some believed that the enrollment of placebound students would increase the construction and operating costs of branch campuses while leaving unused capacity in other colleges. To prevent this situation, the Higher Education Coordinating Board recommended the creation of the Educational Opportunity Grant Program. The program was intended to encourage placebound residents to enroll in any existing college other than a branch campus.

To be eligible for a grant, students must be residents of Washington; live in an area of the state served by a branch campus; have already completed an associate of arts degree or achieved junior standing; have demonstrated financial need; and not be pursuing a degree in theology or religious studies.

An eligible student may receive up to \$2,500 per academic year. Students can attend any four-year public or private baccalaureate institution that has space, except a branch campus. Students are restricted to upper division, baccalaureate work only.

The Legislature appropriated \$5.84 million in the 1999-2001 budget solely for the Educational Opportunity Grant Program. Approximately 1,000 students receive this grant each year.

The Higher Education Coordinating Board is conducting a comprehensive study of the program that will be completed by July 2000. The board is expected to bring forward recommendations to the Legislature regarding possible changes to the current program based on the study findings.

Summary of Bill: The eligibility requirements for the educational opportunity grant are modified. Students are no longer required to live in an area of the state served by a branch campus.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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