
Higher Education Committee

HB 2708

Brief Description: Creating conditional scholarships for prospective teachers.

Sponsors: Representatives Ormsby, Kenney, Cox, Fromhold, Moeller, Dickerson, Chase, Lantz, Morrell, Wood, Hudgins and Kagi.

Brief Summary of Bill
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Creates a conditional scholarship program for potential teachers in math, science, technology, special education, and bilingual education. Consideration is given to bilingual applicants.One year of scholarship obligation can be forgiven for two years of teaching in public schools. For teaching in shortage areas, the forgiveness is one for one.

Hearing Date: 1/30/04

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

Conditional Scholarships: The first conditional teachers' scholarship program was enacted in 1987. Individuals could receive the scholarship for up to five years in the form of a loan. Repayment on the loan was forgiven at a rate of one year of repayment for every two years the recipient taught in a K-12 public school in Washington. The Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) administered the program. The Legislature provided \$300,000 per year for the program until 1994. The program is still in statute but is inactive due to lack of funding.

In recent years concern about a possible teacher shortage has reignited interest in incentives to encourage individuals to enter the teaching profession. Starting with the 2000 supplemental budget, the Legislature has provided conditional scholarships for classified K-12 employees to become teachers. For 2001-03 the Legislature also provided conditional scholarships to classified K-12 employees enrolled in certain alternative teacher certification programs.

Shortage Areas: In a survey conducted in 2002 by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, school districts reported shortages of teachers in special education, math, sciences, English as a second language, bilingual education, and several other subjects.

Summary of Bill:

The HECB will offer conditional scholarships for full or part-time study that leads to teacher certification or an additional teaching endorsement in one of the following subjects: math, science, technology, special education, or bilingual education. Applicants must be residents of Washington.

When selecting recipients, the HECB will give consideration to bilingual students who demonstrate language proficiency according to a standard established by the HECB.

Scholarships may be granted for up to five years in the form of a loan. One year of loan may be forgiven for two years of teaching in a public school. If a recipient teaches in a geographic or subject matter shortage area, one year of loan is forgiven for every year of teaching. Recipients who fail to meet the condition are required to repay the loan with interest. Repayment terms are determined by the HECB.

The maximum amount of the scholarship is resident undergraduate tuition and fees at the University of Washington.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.