

---

HOUSE BILL 1997

---

State of Washington

59th Legislature

2005 Regular Session

By Representative Morris

Read first time 02/14/2005. Referred to Committee on Higher Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to increasing funding for bachelor's and graduate  
2 degrees in high-demand fields; and adding a new section to chapter  
3 28B.10 RCW.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.10 RCW  
6 to read as follows:

7 (1) The legislature finds that Washington lags behind the country  
8 and peer states in production of bachelor's and graduate degrees in the  
9 fields needed to invent new technologies, attract new businesses and  
10 new industries to the state, and spur economic development and job  
11 growth. According to an analysis of data compiled by the national  
12 center for education statistics for 2001:

13 (a) Washington ties for last place among nine peer states in the  
14 number of college graduates in engineering per one hundred thousand in  
15 population;

16 (b) Despite the presence of two major research universities,  
17 Washington is tied for sixth place among nine peer states in the number  
18 of college graduates in biological and life sciences per one hundred  
19 thousand population;

1 (c) Washington's ratio of doctoral degrees to bachelor's degrees  
2 falls far below all peer states, particularly in the critical areas of  
3 science and engineering where research and development by staff with  
4 advanced expertise is crucial for innovation and product design.

5 (2) The legislature further finds that a key contributing factor to  
6 Washington's low production of high-demand degrees is the practice of  
7 funding student enrollment at universities based on an average cost per  
8 student, despite clear evidence that junior and senior-level courses in  
9 engineering and the hard sciences cost thirty to forty percent above  
10 the average, while junior and senior-level courses in fields such as  
11 business and social sciences cost thirty to forty percent below the  
12 average at the state's two research universities.

13 (3) Therefore the legislature intends to establish a goal to  
14 increase course enrollment in engineering, technology, computer  
15 science, hard sciences such as chemistry and physics, and mathematics  
16 in order to double the number of degrees awarded in these high-demand  
17 fields per one hundred thousand population by the year 2015. The  
18 legislature further intends to accomplish this goal by increasing per-  
19 student funding for enrollment in high-demand fields by twenty-five  
20 percent, while decreasing per-student funding for enrollment in other  
21 fields by twenty-five percent.

--- END ---