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**SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6487**

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**State of Washington**

**59th Legislature**

**2006 Regular Session**

**By** Senate Committee on Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education (originally sponsored by Senators Schoesler, Rasmussen, Roach, Morton, Schmidt, Mulliken, Carrell, Stevens, Doumit, Delvin, Benson, Esser, Johnson, Deccio, Shin, Jacobsen, Regala, Hargrove, Zarelli, Honeyford, McAuliffe and Berkey)

READ FIRST TIME 02/02/06.

1       AN ACT Relating to false academic credentials; adding a new section  
2 to chapter 28B.85 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 9A.60 RCW;  
3 adding a new section to chapter 28A.405 RCW; adding a new section to  
4 chapter 28B.50 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 41.06 RCW; and  
5 prescribing penalties.

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

7       NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.85 RCW  
8 to read as follows:

9       (1) It is unlawful for a person to:

10       (a) Grant or award a false academic credential or offer to grant or  
11 award a false academic credential in violation of this section;

12       (b) Represent that a credit earned or granted by the person, in  
13 violation of this section, can be applied toward a credential offered  
14 by another person; or

15       (c) Solicit another person to seek a credential or to earn a credit  
16 that is offered in violation of this section.

17       (2) "False academic credential" has the same definition as in  
18 section 2 of this act.

1 (3) A violation of this section constitutes an unfair or deceptive  
2 act or practice in the conduct of trade or commerce under chapter 19.86  
3 RCW.

4 (4) In addition to any other venue authorized by law, venue for the  
5 prosecution of an offense under this section is in the county in which  
6 an element of the offense occurs.

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 9A.60 RCW  
8 to read as follows:

9 (1) A person is guilty of issuing a false academic credential if  
10 the person knowingly:

11 (a) Grants or awards a false academic credential or offers to grant  
12 or award a false academic credential in violation of this section;

13 (b) Represents that a credit earned or granted by the person in  
14 violation of this section can be applied toward a credential offered by  
15 another person;

16 (c) Grants or offers to grant a credit for which a representation  
17 as described in (b) of this subsection is made; or

18 (d) Solicits another person to seek a credential or to earn a  
19 credit the person knows is offered in violation of this section.

20 (2) A person is guilty of knowingly using a false academic  
21 credential if the person knowingly uses a false academic credential or  
22 falsely claims to have a credential issued by an institution of higher  
23 education that is accredited by an accrediting association recognized  
24 as such by rule of the higher education coordinating board:

25 (a) In a written or oral advertisement or other promotion of a  
26 business; or

27 (b) With the intent to:

28 (i) Obtain employment;

29 (ii) Obtain a license or certificate to practice a trade,  
30 profession, or occupation;

31 (iii) Obtain a promotion, compensation or other benefit, or an  
32 increase in compensation or other benefit, in employment or in the  
33 practice of a trade, profession, or occupation;

34 (iv) Obtain admission to an educational program in this state; or

35 (v) Gain a position in government with authority over another  
36 person, regardless of whether the person receives compensation for the  
37 position.

1 (3) "False academic credential" means a document that provides  
2 evidence or demonstrates completion of an academic or professional  
3 course of instruction beyond the secondary level that results in the  
4 attainment of an academic certificate, degree, or rank, and that is not  
5 issued by a person or entity that: (a) Is an entity accredited by an  
6 agency recognized as such by rule of the higher education coordinating  
7 board or has the international equivalents of such accreditation; or  
8 (b) is an entity authorized as a degree-granting institution by the  
9 higher education coordinating board; or (c) is an entity exempt from  
10 the requirements of authorization as a degree-granting institution by  
11 the higher education coordinating board; or (d) is an entity that has  
12 been granted a waiver by the higher education coordinating board from  
13 the requirements of authorization by the board; or (e) is a foreign  
14 degree-granting institution, as defined by chapter 28B.90 RCW. Such  
15 documents include, but are not limited to, academic certificates,  
16 degrees, coursework, degree credits, transcripts, or certification of  
17 completion of a degree.

18 (4) Issuing a false academic credential is a class C felony.

19 (5) Knowingly using a false academic credential is a class C  
20 felony.

21 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.405  
22 RCW to read as follows:

23 A person who issues or uses a false academic credential is subject  
24 to sections 1 and 2 of this act.

25 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.50 RCW  
26 to read as follows:

27 A person who issues or uses a false academic credential is subject  
28 to sections 1 and 2 of this act.

29 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** A new section is added to chapter 41.06 RCW  
30 to read as follows:

31 A person who issues or uses a false academic credential is subject  
32 to sections 1 and 2 of this act.

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