

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## ESHB 1179

---

As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Higher Education, March 26, 2007  
Ways & Means, April 18, 2007

**Title:** An act relating to allowing students attending a postsecondary institution on a less than half-time basis to qualify for a state need grant.

**Brief Description:** Allowing part-time students at postsecondary institutions to qualify for a state need grant.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Hasegawa, Jarrett, Sells, Roberts, Anderson, Green, Sommers, Kenney, Wallace, Buri, Appleton, Hudgins, Kagi, Ormsby, McDonald, Conway, Wood, Santos, Schual-Berke, Simpson, Lantz, Haigh and Morrell).

**Brief History:** Passed House: 3/12/07, 98-0.

**Committee Activity:** Higher Education: 3/22/07, 3/26/07 [DPA-WM].  
Ways & Means: 4/18/07 [DPA].

---

### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

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

Signed by Senators Shin, Chair; Kilmer, Vice Chair; Delvin, Ranking Minority Member; Berkey, Schoesler and Sheldon.

**Staff:** Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

---

### SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Fraser, Vice Chair, Capital Budget Chair; Pridemore, Vice Chair, Operating Budget; Zarelli, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Carrell, Fairley, Hatfield, Hewitt, Hobbs, Honeyford, Keiser, Kohl-Welles, Oemig, Parlette, Rasmussen, Regala, Roach, Rockefeller, Schoesler and Tom.

**Staff:** Tim Yowell (786-7435)

**Background:** The State Need Grant program began in 1971, and until 1990 was available only to students enrolled full-time (those taking at least 12 quarter credits, or the semester equivalent). In 1990, the Legislature extended State Need Grant eligibility to students enrolled

---

*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

at least half-time (six quarter credits or more). The amount of a particular student's grant depends on the student's family income, the type of institution the student attends (e.g., community college, public research university), and whether the student attends full-time or half-time. In 2005, the Legislature directed the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) to develop a two-year pilot project to assess the need for and feasibility of allowing students enrolled for at least four quarter credits to be eligible for a State Need Grant. Under the pilot, students attending a participating school who enroll for four or five credits are eligible to receive a grant as long as they meet the other eligibility criteria for a State Need Grant. The pilot began in the fall of 2005 and continues through the 2005-07 biennium. Nine institutions are participating: seven community colleges, The Evergreen State College, and Pacific Lutheran University. In the 2005-06 academic year, a total of 680 less-than-half-time students received a State Need Grant under the pilot project.

In December 2006, the HECB issued a report on the pilot project. The HECB reported that the primary reasons students enroll on a less-than-half-time basis include work and family obligations, costs of attending school, and childcare needs. The HECB further reported that 72 percent of the students participating in the pilot are financially independent from their parents, almost half have children of their own, a quarter are single parents, and 34 percent are the first in their family to attend an institute of higher education. Most participating students enrolled for just one term at a less-than-half-time rate and then enrolled half-time or greater for the remainder of the year. The HECB's report makes a number of recommendations regarding the State Need Grant, including: (1) allowing students taking at least three credits to qualify for a grant; (2) having a one-year exception to the matriculation requirement for students enrolled less-than-half-time; and (3) authorizing institutions to make provisional State Need Grant awards to give students additional time to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Current law requires a student to be enrolled in at least six credits to be eligible for a loan or aid from a school's institutional financial aid fund. In its December 2006 report, the HECB recommended changing this eligibility requirement from six to three credits.

**Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill:** Students enrolled for at least three quarter credits (or the equivalent semester credits) at an institution of higher education in Washington may be eligible for a prorated portion of the State Need Grant if they meet the other eligibility requirements of the State Need Grant program. Any child support payments received by students who are parents attending less than half-time will not be used in calculating financial need. The minimum number of credits required to receive a loan or aid from an institution's institutional financial aid fund is also changed from six credits per term to three.

An eligible student enrolled for three to six quarter credits (or the equivalent semester credits) may receive a grant for up to one academic year before matriculating into a program that leads to a degree or certificate. Institutions of higher education may award a State Need Grant to an eligible student on a provisional basis before the student completes the required FAFSA if: (1) the student has never received a State Need Grant; (2) the student completes the FAFSA; (3) the institution has reviewed the student's financial condition and concludes the student is likely eligible for a State Need Grant; and (4) the student attests in writing that the financial information he/she provided the school is accurate and complete, and the student agrees to repay the grant amount if the student is subsequently found to have submitted false information.

**EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY RECOMMENDED AMENDMENT(S) AS PASSED COMMITTEE (Higher Education):** This is a purely technical amendment to correct a typographic error.

**EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY RECOMMENDED AMENDMENT(S) AS PASSED COMMITTEE (Ways & Means):** The eligibility expansion to include students taking three to five credits expires June 30, 2011, and is subject to terms and conditions specified in the budget.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed. The bill is null and void unless funding is provided in the budget.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Higher Education):** PRO: This bill implements recommendations from the HECB. Often, temporary circumstances prevent students from attending school half-time, but this does not indicate a lack of commitment to higher education. The bill will help working adults trying to improve themselves. We should do what we can to help students maintain momentum in pursuing a higher education.

**Persons Testifying (Higher Education):** PRO: Representative Hasegawa, prime sponsor; Rachelle Sharpe, HECB; Lorraine Odem, The Evergreen State College; Nani Jackins Park, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; Madeleine Thompson, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board; Chris Reigelsperger, Washington Student Lobby.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Ways & Means):** PRO: This bill opens access to post-secondary education to students who wouldn't consider enrolling.

**Persons Testifying (Ways & Means):** PRO: Madeleine Thompson, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board.