

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6394

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As of January 30, 2008

**Title:** An act relating to tuition and fee exemptions.

**Brief Description:** Exempting certain first and second-year students from tuition and fees at institutions of higher education.

**Sponsors:** Senators Shin, Rasmussen, Berkey, Kilmer, Oemig, Hobbs, Pridemore, Franklin and Eide.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Higher Education: 1/28/08.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

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

**Background:** Since 2003, resident undergraduate tuition rates at institutions of higher education have been provided in the Omnibus Appropriations Act. Tuition fees include building fees and operating fees. Building fees are used to construct, equip, and maintain campus buildings. The building fee at each institution for each academic year is a percentage of total tuition fees calculated by the Higher Education Coordinating Board. The operating fee is the remainder of the tuition fee other than the building fee. There are a number of services and activity fees that are charged in addition to the tuition fee.

**Summary of Bill:** A resident student at a public institution of higher education is exempt from tuition fees for the first two academic years after initial enrollment if the student registers at the institution within eight months after meeting high school graduation requirements or receiving a certificate of educational competence and the student continues to make satisfactory academic progress.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 21, 2008.

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

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: Student access to higher education is harmed by high tuition and student debt. The best form of financial aid is low tuition. High school graduation is a turning point for students and we should make sure that good students are not

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left behind because of money. Each year, higher education opportunities get more limited because of tuition increases.

OTHER: We need to maintain quality in the programs we provide and that takes money. The link between tuition and state support needs to be acknowledged.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Shin, prime sponsor; Sarah Ishmael, Washington Student Lobby.

OTHER: Mary Alice Grobins, SBCTC; Terry Teale, Council of Presidents.