
HOUSE BILL 2111

State of Washington 61st Legislature 2009 Regular Session

By Representatives Hasegawa, Chase, and Santos

Read first time 02/10/09. Referred to Committee on Higher Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to establishing the GET ready for college program;
2 adding a new section to chapter 28B.95 RCW; and creating a new section.

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

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that education is the
5 single most important investment a state can make to ensure that it
6 remains globally competitive. The legislature, Washington citizens,
7 education leaders and practitioners, and students must take collective
8 responsibility to ensure that all qualified citizens have the
9 opportunity to succeed in a world-class, learner-focused, seamless
10 education. The legislature further finds that lifelong learning is a
11 fundamental value of a civil society, the state of Washington, and the
12 primary family of its students.

13 The legislature also finds that early investment in a student can
14 make the difference in the student's aspiration and commitment.
15 Research indicates that students form attitudes about going to college
16 as early as elementary school. If policymakers want to increase
17 participation in the state's apprenticeship programs, colleges, and
18 universities, outreach efforts must begin early and occur often.

1 Saving for college is one way a student's family and extended
2 community can ensure that financial obstacles will not prevent a child
3 from realizing the dream of going to college. A modest financial
4 investment by the state of Washington to initiate a college savings
5 plan will contribute to the success of students in achieving their
6 educational aspirations and will benefit the state's goal of educating
7 more students to higher levels of education.

8 Therefore, the legislature intends to encourage families to begin
9 saving for college by paying the enrollment fee for a GET account for
10 each child born in Washington and supplementing that account with
11 additional GET units over the child's educational career. This action
12 plants the seed, early on, that going to college is possible,
13 regardless of socio-economic status. It also plants the seed that
14 saving for college is important and provides an easy way to begin
15 saving.

16 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.95 RCW
17 to read as follows:

18 (1) The GET ready for college program is established. Subject to
19 funds appropriated for this specific purpose, the higher education
20 coordinating board shall pay the fifty-dollar enrollment fee to open a
21 GET account on behalf of every child born in Washington state after the
22 effective date of this section. In carrying out this duty, the board
23 shall:

24 (a) Develop and implement a process for establishing the accounts
25 and account beneficiaries;

26 (b) Establish rules for implementing the program;

27 (c) Provide information to hospitals, clinics, physicians and nurse
28 practitioners, birthing centers, community organizations, school
29 districts, and public institutions of higher education regarding the
30 program, the state's offer to pay the enrollment fee to open an
31 account, the one unit minimum purchase requirement, and the program
32 benefits and limitations;

33 (d) Accept grants and donations from private sources to match state
34 funds appropriated for the GET ready for college program.

35 (2) Parents or guardians of children born in Washington state after
36 the effective date of this section who open a GET account and purchase
37 one GET unit shall have deposited into that account an additional GET

1 unit upon the child reaching five educational milestones. The higher
2 education coordinating board shall purchase GET units to be owned and
3 held in trust by the board and distribute units to individual,
4 personally owned accounts upon the child achieving the following:

5 (a) Entry into kindergarten;

6 (b) Completion of the fourth grade statewide academic assessments
7 for reading, writing, and mathematics. The child does not need to meet
8 the state standard to receive the GET unit;

9 (c) Completion of the fifth grade;

10 (d) Completion of the eighth grade; and

11 (e) Completion of the high school statewide academic assessment.
12 The child does not need to meet the state standard to receive the GET
13 unit.

14 (3) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall
15 enter into any necessary data-sharing agreements with the higher
16 education coordinating board to facilitate implementation of this
17 section.

18 (4) The higher education coordinating board shall develop necessary
19 forms, policies, and procedures to provide parents or guardians the
20 ability to voluntarily waive any privacy rights to facilitate the
21 exchange of personal information between the common schools and the
22 higher education coordinating board for implementation of this section.

23 (5) The GET ready for college account is created in the custody of
24 the state treasurer. The board shall deposit into the account all
25 money received for the GET ready for college program from
26 appropriations and private sources. Only the executive director of the
27 board or the executive director's designee may authorize expenditures
28 from the account. Expenditures from the account, not to exceed five
29 percent, may be used by the board to carry out the provisions of this
30 section. The account is subject to allotment procedures under chapter
31 43.88 RCW, but an appropriation is not required for expenditures.

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