

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1650

As of March 17, 2011

Title: An act relating to state need grant eligibility.

Brief Description: Changing state need grant eligibility provisions.

Sponsors: House Committee on Education Appropriations & Oversight (originally sponsored by Representatives Hasegawa, Kenney, Santos, McCoy, Moscoso, Sells, Carlyle, Reykdal, Seaquist, Jacks, Probst, Maxwell and Ormsby).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/02/11, 77-20.

Committee Activity: Higher Education & Workforce Development: 3/16/11.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

Background: The State Need Grant is designed to pay a portion of educational costs for needy and disadvantaged students. In 2009-2010 state funding for financial aid totaled \$250 million and the State Need Grant comprised the largest portion at \$215 million. In 2009-2010 the number of eligible students rose 18 percent to nearly 74,000 students. The number of un-served students rose from 5,498 to nearly 22,000 students.

In 1990 the Legislature extended State Need Grant eligibility to students enrolled at least half-time (six quarter credits or more). 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 enrolled for four or five credits were eligible to receive a grant as long as they met the other eligibility criteria for a State Need Grant. In 2007 the Legislature extended the part-time student pilot program to students enrolled for at least three quarter credits, or the semester equivalent. The pilot program expires June 30, 2011.

Summary of Bill: The pilot status of the program allowing part-time students to be eligible for the State Need Grant and the expiration date are removed. Students who are enrolled or accepted for enrollment for at least three quarter credits, or the equivalent semester hours, in a qualifying higher education program are eligible for the State Need Grant.

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.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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: The bill just extends access to an already existing program. The pilot has been successful. Most students who drop to part-time status do so temporarily to deal with issues outside of school. Sometimes life gets in the way of school. The program helps provide financial aid to people seeking workforce training.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Hasegawa, prime sponsor; Rachelle Sharpe, HECB; Scott Copeland, SBCTC; Iris Maute-Gibson, Washington Student Association; Carolyn McKinnon, WTECB.