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HOUSE BILL 1907

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State of Washington

62nd Legislature

2011 Regular Session

By Representatives Hasegawa, Moscoso, Reykdal, Seaquist, Santos, Probst, and Kenney

Read first time 02/09/11. Referred to Committee on Higher Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to the GET ready for college program; adding a new  
2 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 socioeconomic 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 board shall pay the  
20 fifty dollar enrollment fee to open a GET account on behalf of every  
21 child born in Washington state after the effective date of this  
22 section. In carrying out this duty, the board shall:

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

25 (b) Establish rules for implementing the program;

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

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

34 (2) Parents or guardians of children born in Washington state after  
35 the effective date of this section who open a GET account and purchase  
36 one GET unit shall have deposited into that account additional GET  
37 units upon the child reaching five educational milestones. The board

1 shall purchase GET units to be owned and held in trust by the board and  
2 distribute units to individual, personally owned accounts upon the  
3 child achieving the following:

4 (a) Upon entry into kindergarten, five units;

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

9 (c) Upon completion of the fifth grade, fifteen units;

10 (d) Upon completion of the eighth grade, twenty units; and

11 (e) Upon graduation from a Washington state public high school,  
12 fifty units.

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

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

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

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