

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1251

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Higher Education, March 19, 2013

Title: An act relating to membership on the opportunity scholarship board.

Brief Description: Increasing membership on the opportunity scholarship board.

Sponsors: Representatives Stonier, Carlyle, Seaquist, Harris, Maxwell, Takko, Kochmar, Vick, MacEwen, Fitzgibbon, Morrell, Tarleton, Haler, Riccelli and Bergquist.

Brief History: Passed House: 3/04/13, 58-40.

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 3/14/13, 3/19/13 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Bailey, Chair; Becker, Vice Chair; Kohl-Welles, Ranking Member; Baumgartner, Frockt and Tom.

Staff: Kimberly Cushing (786-7421)

Background: In 2011, the Legislature established the Opportunity Scholarship and Opportunity Expansion programs to mitigate the impact of tuition increases, increase the number of baccalaureate degrees in high employer demand and other programs, and invest in programs and students to meet labor market demands. The scholarships are funded by a combination of private and state monies. The expansion awards are funded with voluntary contributions of high technology research and development tax credits.

These two programs are overseen by the Opportunity Scholarship Board (Board), made up of seven persons appointed by the Governor. For three of these appointments, the Governor must consider names from a list provided by the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate. Four of the appointees must be foundation or business and industry representatives selected from a list of nominees provided by the private sector donors to the Opportunity Scholarship and Opportunity Expansion programs. The Governor may request that the donors submit an additional list or lists. Five members of the board constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

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.

The Board must provide oversight and guidance of the programs consistent with legislative priorities, identify eligible education and training programs for the Opportunity Scholarship, and select institutions of higher education to receive Opportunity Expansion awards. Together with the program administrator, the Board must set annual fundraising goals and solicit funds.

Summary of Bill: The Opportunity Scholarship Board is increased from seven to nine members. The two additional members must be foundation or business and industry representatives appointed by the Governor.

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 Board puts together funds for scholarships for higher education. They honor the fact that it is hard for students to get started with increasing costs of education, by increasing scholarships as students progress in school. Adding more members to the Board will give greater opportunities for those who are raising money. The expansion helps the Board reflect the business and industry in the state with a growing need for high-demand degrees. Additionally, adding members will facilitate the Board's ability to meet members' busy schedules and meet quorum requirements.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Stonier, prime sponsor; Susan Pollack, WA State Opportunity Scholarship Board/College Success Foundation.