
HOUSE BILL 1238

State of Washington 64th Legislature 2015 Regular Session

By Representatives Pollet, Haler, Bergquist, Hargrove, Sells,
Fitzgibbon, Fey, and Tarleton

Read first time 01/15/15. Referred to Committee on Higher Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to affordable tuition planning; amending RCW
2 28B.77.020; and creating a new section.

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

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature intends that the cost
5 of tuition, where an individual resides in the state, economic
6 status, race or ethnicity, or other status of an individual, should
7 not be a barrier for any resident to obtain a postsecondary
8 certificate or degree from an institution of higher education. The
9 legislature recognizes that for higher education tuition to be
10 affordable for most Washington residents it should not exceed ten
11 percent of the median family income.

12 (2) The legislature finds that student loan debt has become a
13 lifetime barrier to improving the quality of life for many
14 Washingtonians. The legislature recognizes that federal student loan
15 programs are scheduled to increase interest rates, while average debt
16 is increasing to twenty-eight thousand dollars for a bachelor's
17 degree. If loan interest rates rise to eight percent, this will
18 threaten students' abilities to choose to pursue public service
19 careers with starting salaries in the thirty thousand dollars to
20 fifty thousand dollars range due to debt payments of over five
21 thousand dollars per year.

1 (3) The legislature finds that financial aid programs, such as
2 the college bound scholarship program and the state need grant
3 program, do not address affordability for many students whose
4 families earn fifty to seventy percent of the median household income
5 and provide no support for those who are truly in the middle of the
6 state's income distribution. The legislature's goal is to use the
7 total cost of attendance as a factor when considering student
8 financial aid policy to accurately represent the true cost of higher
9 education.

10 (4) The legislature recognizes that in 2002 the state's share of
11 spending relative to tuition at public baccalaureate institutions was
12 seventy-six percent and in 2012 it dropped to thirty-six percent. The
13 legislature finds that this shift has resulted in a reduction in
14 access and opportunity. For example tuition at the University of
15 Washington rose from ten percent of the median household income to
16 over twenty percent in just five years.

17 (5) The legislature's goal is to make higher education accessible
18 and affordable for all families and it sets a long-term goal for
19 tuition at public institutions of higher education to be no higher
20 than ten percent of the median household income.

21 **Sec. 2.** RCW 28B.77.020 and 2013 2nd sp.s. c 25 s 6 are each
22 amended to read as follows:

23 (1) Aligned with the state's biennial budget and policy cycles,
24 the council shall propose educational attainment goals and priorities
25 to meet the state's evolving needs. The council shall identify
26 strategies for meeting the goals and priorities by means of a short-
27 term strategic action plan and a ten-year plan that serves as a
28 roadmap.

29 (a) The goals must address the needs of Washington residents to
30 reach higher levels of educational attainment and Washington's
31 workforce needs for certificates and degrees in particular fields of
32 study.

33 (b) The council shall identify the resources it deems appropriate
34 to meet statewide goals and also recognize current state economic
35 conditions and state resources.

36 (c) In proposing goals, the council shall collaborate with the
37 superintendent of public instruction, the professional educator
38 standards board, the state board of education, the state board for
39 community and technical colleges, the four-year institutions of

1 higher education, independent colleges and degree-granting
2 institutions, certificate-granting institutions, and the workforce
3 training and education coordinating board.

4 (2) The council shall update the strategic action plan every two
5 years with the first strategic action plan to be submitted to the
6 governor and the legislature by December 1, 2012. The ten-year
7 roadmap must be updated every two years with the first roadmap to be
8 submitted to the governor and the legislature by December 1, 2013.
9 The council must provide regular updates to the joint higher
10 education committee created in RCW 44.04.360 as needed.

11 (3) In order to develop the ten-year roadmap, the council shall
12 conduct strategic planning in collaboration with agencies and
13 stakeholders and include input from the legislature. The council must
14 also consult with the STEM education innovation alliance established
15 under RCW 28A.188.030 in order to align strategies under the roadmap
16 with the STEM framework for education and accountability developed by
17 the alliance. The roadmap must encompass all sectors of higher
18 education, including secondary to postsecondary transitions. The
19 roadmap must outline strategies that address:

20 (a) Strategic planning, which includes setting benchmarks and
21 goals for long-term degree production generally and in particular
22 fields of study;

23 (b) Expanding access, affordability, quality, efficiency, and
24 accountability among the various institutions of higher education;

25 (c) Meeting affordability and access goals by evaluating and
26 proposing strategies, including increased state support, to return to
27 tuition not exceeding ten percent of the state median household
28 income at institutions of higher education and basing financial aid
29 policies on the total cost of attendance, provided these strategies
30 do not harm institutional quality;

31 (d) Higher education finance planning and strategic investments
32 including budget recommendations necessary to meet statewide goals;

33 ~~((d))~~ (e) System design and coordination;

34 ~~((e))~~ (f) Improving student transitions;

35 ~~((f))~~ (g) Higher education data and analysis, in collaboration
36 with the education data center, which includes outcomes for
37 recruitment, retention, and success of students;

38 ~~((g))~~ (h) College and career access preparedness, in
39 collaboration with the office of the superintendent of public
40 instruction and the state board of education;

1 ~~((h))~~ (i) Expanding participation and success for racial and
2 ethnic minorities in higher education;

3 ~~((i))~~ (j) Development and expansion of innovations in higher
4 education including innovations to increase attainment of
5 postsecondary certificates, and associate, baccalaureate, graduate,
6 and professional degrees; and innovations to improve precollege
7 education in terms of cost-effectiveness and transitions to college-
8 level education;

9 ~~((j))~~ (k) Strengthening the education pipeline and degree
10 production in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics
11 fields, and aligning strategies under the roadmap with the STEM
12 framework for action and accountability developed under RCW
13 28A.188.030; and

14 ~~((k))~~ (l) Relevant policy research.

15 (4) As needed, the council must conduct system reviews consistent
16 with RCW 28B.77.080.

17 (5) The council shall facilitate the development and expansion of
18 innovative practices within, between, and among the sectors to
19 increase educational attainment and assess the effectiveness of the
20 innovations.

21 (6) The council shall use the data and analysis produced by, and
22 in consultation with, the education data center created in RCW
23 43.41.400 in developing policy recommendations and proposing goals.
24 In conducting research and analysis the council at a minimum must:

25 (a) Identify barriers to increasing educational attainment,
26 evaluate effectiveness of various educational models, identify best
27 practices, and recommend methods to overcome barriers;

28 (b) Analyze data from multiple sources including data from
29 academic research and from areas and agencies outside of education
30 including but not limited to data from the department of health, the
31 department of corrections, and the department of social and health
32 services to determine best practices to remove barriers and to
33 improve educational attainment;

34 (c) Assess educational achievement disaggregated by income level,
35 age, gender, race and ethnicity, country of origin, and other
36 relevant demographic groups working with data from the education data
37 center;

38 (d) Track progress toward meeting the state's goals;

1 (e) Communicate results and provide access to data analysis to
2 policymakers, the superintendent of public instruction, institutions
3 of higher education, students, and the public; and

4 (f) Use data from the education data center wherever appropriate
5 to conduct duties in (a) through (e) of this subsection.

6 (7) The council shall collaborate with the appropriate state
7 agencies and stakeholders, including the state board of education,
8 the office of the superintendent of public instruction, the state
9 board for community and technical colleges, the workforce training
10 and education coordinating board, and the four-year institutions of
11 higher education to improve student transitions and success including
12 but not limited to:

13 (a) Setting minimum college admission standards for four-year
14 institutions of higher education, including a requirement that
15 coursework in American sign language or an American Indian language
16 satisfies any requirement for instruction in a language other than
17 English that the council or the institutions may establish as a
18 general undergraduate admissions requirement;

19 (b) Proposing comprehensive policies and programs to encourage
20 students to prepare for, understand how to access, and pursue
21 postsecondary college and career programs, including specific
22 policies and programs for students with disabilities;

23 (c) Recommending policies that require coordination between or
24 among sectors such as dual high school-college programs, awarding
25 college credit for advanced high school work, and transfer between
26 two and four-year institutions of higher education or between
27 different four-year institutions of higher education; and

28 (d) Identifying transitions issues and solutions for students,
29 from high school to postsecondary education including community and
30 technical colleges, four-year institutions of higher education,
31 apprenticeships, training, or workplace education; between two-year
32 and four-year institutions of higher education; and from
33 postsecondary education to career. In addressing these issues the
34 council must recognize that these transitions may occur multiple
35 times as students continue their education.

36 (8) The council directs the work of the office, which includes
37 administration of student financial aid programs under RCW
38 28B.76.090, including the state need grant and other scholarships,
39 the Washington advanced college tuition payment program, and work-
40 study programs.

1 (9) The council may administer state and federal grants and
2 programs including but not limited to those programs that provide
3 incentives for improvements related to increased access and success
4 in postsecondary education.

5 (10) The council shall protect higher education consumers
6 including:

7 (a) Approving degree-granting postsecondary institutions
8 consistent with existing statutory criteria;

9 (b) Establishing minimum criteria to assess whether students who
10 attend proprietary institutions of higher education shall be eligible
11 for the state need grant and other forms of state financial aid.

12 (i) The criteria shall include retention rates, completion rates,
13 loan default rates, and annual tuition increases, among other
14 criteria for students who receive state need grant as in chapter
15 28B.92 RCW and any other state financial aid.

16 (ii) The council may remove proprietary institutions of higher
17 education from eligibility for the state need grant or other form of
18 state financial aid if it finds that the institution or college does
19 not meet minimum criteria.

20 (iii) The council shall report by December 1, 2014, to the joint
21 higher education committee in RCW 44.04.360 on the outcomes of
22 students receiving state need grants, impacts on meeting the state's
23 higher education goals for educational attainment, and options for
24 prioritization of the state need grant and possible consequences of
25 implementing each option. When examining options for prioritizing the
26 state need grant the council shall consider awarding grants based on
27 need rather than date of application and making awards based on other
28 criteria selected by the council.

29 (11) The council shall adopt residency requirements by rule.

30 (12) The council shall arbitrate disputes between and among four-
31 year institutions of higher education and the state board for
32 community and technical colleges at the request of one or more of the
33 institutions involved, or at the request of the governor, or from a
34 resolution adopted by the legislature. The decision of the council
35 shall be binding on the participants in the dispute.

36 (13) The council may solicit, accept, receive, and administer
37 federal funds or private funds, in trust, or otherwise, and contract
38 with foundations or with for-profit or nonprofit organizations to
39 support the purposes and functions of the council.

1 (14) The council shall represent the broad public interest above
2 the interests of the individual institutions of higher education.

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