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HOUSE BILL 2039

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State of Washington                      64th Legislature                      2015 Regular Session

By Representatives Hargrove, Reykdal, and Tharinger

Read first time 02/09/15. Referred to Committee on Higher Education.

1            AN ACT Relating to encouraging eligible students to use their  
2 state need grant and college bound scholarship awards to complete two  
3 years of education at community or technical colleges; amending RCW  
4 28B.92.020 and 28B.92.050; and creating a new section.

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

6            NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 1.**    The legislature finds that more than  
7 thirty-three thousand students are eligible for the state need grant  
8 but do not receive an award. The burden of student loan debt  
9 continues to have a significant impact on middle-income families. By  
10 restructuring the program as it is currently funded the program could  
11 serve more students.

12            **Sec. 2.**    RCW 28B.92.020 and 2011 1st sp.s. c 11 s 158 are each  
13 amended to read as follows:

14            (1)    The legislature finds that the higher education  
15 community((~~r~~)) has completed a review of the state need grant  
16 program. It is the intent of the legislature to endorse the proposed  
17 changes to the state need grant program, including:

18            (a)    Reaffirmation that the primary purpose of the state need  
19 grant program is to assist low-income, needy, and disadvantaged  
20 Washington residents attending institutions of higher education;

1 (b) A goal that the base state need grant amount over time be  
2 increased to be equivalent to the rate of tuition charged to resident  
3 undergraduate students attending Washington state public colleges and  
4 universities;

5 (c) State need grant recipients be required to contribute a  
6 portion of the total cost of their education through self-help;

7 (d) State need grant recipients be required to document their  
8 need for dependent care assistance after taking into account other  
9 public funds provided for like purposes; and

10 (e) Institutional aid administrators be allowed to determine  
11 whether a student eligible for a state need grant in a given academic  
12 year may remain eligible for the ensuing year if the student's family  
13 income increases by no more than a marginal amount except for funds  
14 provided through the educational assistance grant program for  
15 students with dependents.

16 (2) The legislature further finds that the changes in subsection  
17 (1) of this section((7)) should do so in a timely manner.

18 (3) The legislature also finds that:

19 (a) In most circumstances, need grant eligibility should not  
20 extend beyond five years or one hundred twenty-five percent of the  
21 published length of the program in which the student is enrolled or  
22 the credit or clock-hour equivalent; ((and))

23 (b) State financial aid programs should continue to adhere to the  
24 principle that funding follows resident students to their choice of  
25 institution of higher education; and

26 (c) Students who are eligible to receive state need grants and  
27 college bound scholarships are encouraged to complete their first two  
28 years of postsecondary education at a community or technical college  
29 before using state aid to enroll in a four-year institution of higher  
30 education.

31 **Sec. 3.** RCW 28B.92.050 and 2011 1st sp.s. c 11 s 161 are each  
32 amended to read as follows:

33 The office shall have the following powers and duties:

34 (1) Conduct a full analysis of student financial aid as a means  
35 of:

36 (a) Fulfilling educational aspirations of students of the state  
37 of Washington, and

38 (b) Improving the general, social, cultural, and economic  
39 character of the state.

1       Such an analysis will be a continuous one and will yield current  
2 information relevant to needed improvements in the state program of  
3 student financial aid. The office will disseminate the information  
4 yielded by their analyses to all appropriate individuals and agents.

5       (2) Design a state program of student financial aid based on the  
6 data of the study referred to in this section. The state programs  
7 will supplement available federal and local aid programs. The state  
8 programs of student financial aid will not exceed the difference  
9 between the budgetary costs of attending an institution of higher  
10 education and the student's total resources, including family  
11 support, personal savings, employment, and federal, state, and local  
12 aid programs.

13       (3) Determine and establish criteria for financial need of the  
14 individual applicant based upon the consideration of that particular  
15 applicant. In making this determination the office shall consider the  
16 following:

17       (a) Assets and income of the student.

18       (b) Assets and income of the parents, or the individuals legally  
19 responsible for the care and maintenance of the student.

20       (c) The cost of attending the institution the student is  
21 attending or planning to attend.

22       (d) Any other criteria deemed relevant to the office.

23       (4) Set the amount of financial aid to be awarded to any  
24 individual needy or disadvantaged student in any school year.

25       (5) Award financial aid to needy or disadvantaged students for a  
26 school year based upon only that amount necessary to fill the  
27 financial gap between the budgetary cost of attending an institution  
28 of higher education and the family and student contribution. Except  
29 as relates to students enrolled in an institution of higher education  
30 before August 1, 2015, when determining the budgetary cost of  
31 attending an institution of higher education for a student receiving  
32 the state need grant or college bound scholarship, the office must  
33 use the tuition and fee rate set by the state board for community and  
34 technical colleges until the student completes ninety quarter credit  
35 hours or sixty semester credit hours.

36       (6) Review the need and eligibility of all applications on an  
37 annual basis and adjust financial aid to reflect changes in the

1 financial need of the recipients and the cost of attending the  
2 institution of higher education.

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