
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6512

State of Washington

64th Legislature

2016 Regular Session

By Senate Higher Education (originally sponsored by Senators Baumgartner and Conway)

READ FIRST TIME 02/05/16.

1 AN ACT Relating to requiring that a percentage of state need
2 grant recipients be pursuing degrees in STEM subjects; creating new
3 sections; and providing an expiration date.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that Washington is a
6 hub for job opportunities in science, technology, engineering, and
7 mathematics (STEM). The state has the highest percentage of people
8 working in STEM fields, according to the technology alliance, but
9 ranks fortieth in STEM master's degrees held by twenty-four to
10 thirty-four year olds and thirtieth for STEM PhDs.

11 The legislature finds that it is important to understand current
12 efforts to increase STEM production at the state's public
13 institutions of higher education. This includes knowing both the
14 existing opportunities and challenges for low-income students to
15 pursue degrees in these fields.

16 Therefore, the legislature intends to determine the percentage of
17 state need grant recipients currently enrolled in a program of study
18 in the STEM field as well as existing obstacles that could prevent
19 even higher enrollment in these programs.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) A work group is created to study the
2 relationship between state need grants and the pursuit of degrees in
3 STEM fields.

4 (a) The work group shall include one representative from each of
5 the four-year institutions of higher education as defined in RCW
6 28B.10.016, the state board for community and technical colleges, and
7 the student achievement council.

8 (b) The work group may invite, at its discretion, representatives
9 from other public and private Washington institutions of higher
10 education and agencies to provide advice and expertise.

11 (2) The purpose of the work group is to:

12 (a) Analyze data to determine the percentage of students that are
13 receiving state need grant funding and pursuing a degree in STEM
14 fields;

15 (b) Identify challenges or obstacles that prevent students
16 receiving state need grant funding from pursuing STEM degree
17 programs;

18 (c) Evaluate how public and private institutions of higher
19 education in other states have increased enrollments in STEM degree
20 programs among middle and lower-income student populations; and

21 (d) Develop recommendations that would effectively increase the
22 overall rate of state need grant students participating in STEM
23 degree programs.

24 (3) The work group shall report to the legislature and the
25 institutions of higher education on its findings and recommendations
26 by December 31, 2016.

27 (4) This section expires August 1, 2017.

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