

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1512

As Reported by House Committee On:
Higher Education

Title: An act relating to expanding college bound scholarship eligibility.

Brief Description: Expanding college bound scholarship eligibility.

Sponsors: Representatives Bergquist, Stambaugh, McBride, Gregerson, Slatter, Frame, Macri, Peterson, Hudgins, Pollet, Orwall, Doglio, Appleton, Fitzgibbon, Goodman, Farrell and Stanford.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 2/7/17, 2/15/17 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Expands a student's initial eligibility for the College Bound Scholarship (CBS) to the seventh and eighth grade, rather than just the seventh grade.
- Allows eligible students to sign a CBS pledge in the ninth or tenth grade if they were previously ineligible in the seventh or eighth grade as a Washington student.
- Expands income eligibility for the CBS award to 125 percent of the state's median family income (MFI).
- Provides students with family incomes between 65 and 125 percent of MFI with a CBS award equal to tuition and fees at the community and technical colleges for two years.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Hansen, Chair; Pollet, Vice Chair; Orwall, Sells, Stambaugh and Tarleton.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Holy, Ranking Minority Member; Van Werven, Assistant Ranking Minority Member.

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.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Haler.

Staff: Megan Mulvihill (786-7304).

Background:

College Bound Scholarship Program.

The College Board Scholarship (CBS) program was established in 2007 to provide guaranteed four-year tuition to students from low-income families. The first CBS awards were granted to the graduating high school class of 2012. Eligible students for the CBS include those who:

- qualify for free or reduced-price lunches in the seventh grade; or
- are dependent from parents or guardians, or are receiving extended foster care services; and
- are in grades 7 through 12; or
- are between the ages of 18 and 21 years and have not graduated from high school.

In the seventh grade, students become eligible for the CBS and are notified of their eligibility and the requirements for award of the scholarship. To be eligible to receive the CBS, a student must sign a pledge during the seventh or eighth grade that includes a commitment to graduate from high school with at least a C average and no felony convictions. To receive the CBS, the student must graduate high school having fulfilled the CBS pledge requirements. Upon graduation, the student's family income will be assessed, and if it does not exceed 65 percent of the state median family income (MFI), the student will receive a scholarship.

The CBS recipients that attend public two-year or four-year institutions of higher education receive an award to cover the cost of tuition and fees, minus any state-funded grant, scholarship, or waiver assistance, plus \$500 for books and materials. The student must maintain satisfactory academic progress and may not receive the scholarship for more than four full-time years.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

A student's eligibility for the CBS program is determined in the seventh and eighth grade, and the student may also be eligible to sign the CBS pledge in the ninth or tenth grade, if in ninth or tenth grade he or she becomes eligible for free or reduced-price lunches and was previously ineligible in the seventh or eighth grade while a Washington student.

Students whose family incomes are greater than 65 percent of state MFI, but less than 125 percent of state MFI, must receive a CBS award as follows:

- for those attending two- or four-year public institutions of higher education or private four-year institutions of higher education, the award must be equal to tuition and fees at the community and technical colleges; or

- for those attending private vocational schools in Washington, the award must be the representative average of awards granted to students in community and technical colleges.

Students between 65 and 125 percent of state MFI may receive the CBS award for two full-time years.

Updates outdated references from the Higher Education Coordinating Board to the Student Achievement Council.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The eighth grade is added to when a student may become eligible for the CBS, and it is clarified that students are to be notified of their eligibility for the CBS in the seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth grades.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Students whose families make 70 to 125 percent of the state MFI do not qualify for the CBS, but these are families who are still not making a lot of money. These percentages are an arbitrary line drawn in the sand, but \$2,000 or \$3,000 of aid can make a big difference to a student. This brings the dream back for kids who find out their parents would otherwise make too much money, and they would no longer qualify for the scholarship. In addition, a student should be given an opportunity to sign up for the CBS if their parent loses their job in the ninth or tenth grade, and the student suddenly qualifies for free or reduced price lunch.

The CBS is a great program to motivate students to stay in high school and dream of going to college. The CBS has seen greater numbers of student sign up each year, and the CBS students graduate high school at nearly the same rate as those students who do not qualify. For those low-income students who did qualify for the CBS, but did not sign up, they graduate high school at 12 percent less than CBS students. In addition, 92 percent of the CBS students enrolled in college. There were 11 percent of CBS students who signed up, but were not eligible at graduation because of too high of income. A student is still considered financially needy if the family income is at 125 percent MFI.

If students do not receive the scholarship, then their hard work is wasted. Family income changes with the economy, and one year of growth does not mean a family can pay for college. The CBS is the only thing that keeps some students in college. First generation

college students need financial resources. Financial aid is the most important thing legislators can do for college students.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Bergquist, prime sponsor; Maria Hernandez and Luna Garcia, Fort Vancouver High School; Norma Heredia, Whitworth University; and Rachelle Sharpe, Washington Student Achievement Council.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.