

SENATE BILL REPORT

2SHB 1293

As of February 20, 2018

Title: An act relating to eliminating the parent or guardian approval requirement for the college bound scholarship pledge.

Brief Description: Eliminating the parent or guardian approval requirement for the college bound scholarship pledge.

Sponsors: House Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Ortiz-Self, Caldier, Stonier, Doglio, Orwall, Senn, Tarleton, McBride, Gregerson, Kagi, Jinkins, Santos, Pollet, Bergquist, Kilduff, Young and Frame).

Brief History: Passed House: 1/18/18, 93-3.

Committee Activity: Higher Education & Workforce Development: 2/20/18.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows a school counselor or guardian to witness a seventh or eighth grade student's College Bound Scholarship (CBS) pledge if unable to contact the student's parents or guardians.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Staff: Kellee Gunn (786-7429)

Background: The CBS Program. The CBS program was established in 2007 to provide guaranteed four-year tuition to resident 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;
- 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.

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.

Beginning in the seventh grade, eligible students 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. The pledge must be witnessed by a parent or guardian and forwarded to the Office of Student Financial Assistance within the Student Achievement Council (WSAC). If the student is a dependent, the student is automatically enrolled without any necessary action by the student or the student's family.

To receive the CBS, the student must graduate 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, 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 Bill: Parents or guardians of a student must be notified of their child's eligibility and the requirements for a CBS award in the seventh grade.

Beginning in the 2018-19 academic year, WSAC is required to secure the signature of the seventh or eighth grade student's parent or guardian for the purpose of witnessing the student's pledge. If WSAC is unable to obtain the signature of the student's parent or guardian, they may partner with the school counselor or administrator to secure the parent's or guardian's signature. The school counselor or administrator must then make multiple attempts to secure the parent's or guardian's signature. If the parent's or guardian's signature is still not obtained, the school counselor or administrator must indicate they were unsuccessful to WSAC and the reasons the signature is not available. The school counselor or administrator may then witness the student's CBS pledge unless the parent or guardian has indicated that they do not wish for the student to participate in the program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Every year I receive a call from a counselor that is crying because they cannot get a hold of a parent to witness the CBS pledge. This program was built for students who are in situations with barriers, such as the ones that lead to being unable to get a parent signature. Every eligible student should have a chance to participate in this program. WSAC currently accepts counselor signatures on a case-by-case basis, and this would allow for it in other cases.

The data shows that College Bound student graduates at a higher rate than other students. This signature requirement is a seemingly small barrier. Incarceration, work, rehab of parents as well as youth who are unaccompanied and homeless are effected. This bill offers a no-cost simple solution to provide them an opportunity.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Lillian Ortiz-Self, Prime Sponsor; Becky Thompson, Washington Student Achievement Council; Michelle Alejano, Director, College Bound Outreach, Washington College Access Network.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.