

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6543

As of January 29, 2018

Title: An act relating to reducing community and technical college tuition.

Brief Description: Reducing community and technical college tuition.

Sponsors: Senators Braun, Fain, O'Ban, Schoesler, Short and Wilson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education & Workforce Development: 2/01/18.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Reduces tuition at community and technical colleges by 10 percent in the 2018-19 academic year.
- Directs the Legislature to appropriate the net revenue loss from the reduction in resident undergraduate operating fees.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Staff: Alicia Kinne-Clawson (786-7407)

Background: Tuition-Setting Authority. In 2011, the Legislature enacted E2SHB 1795, the Higher Education Opportunity Act, which provided four-year institutions the authority to set tuition rates for resident undergraduate students through the 2014-15 academic year. In 2012 and again in 2013, the Legislature suspended the authority to charge resident undergraduate students differential tuition rates in the operating budgets. This suspension remained in effect for the remainder of the 2013-15 biennium.

College Affordability Program. In 2015, the Legislature enacted 2ESSB 5954, the College Affordability Program, which reduced resident undergraduate tuition at the public institutions of higher education for the 2015-17 biennium, and permanently removed undergraduate tuition-setting authority. In fiscal year 2015-16, resident undergraduate tuition at all public colleges and universities was reduced by 5 percent. In 2016-17, resident undergraduate tuition at public regional universities and The Evergreen State College was reduced by 20 percent and resident undergraduate tuition at public research universities was reduced by 15

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percent. Beginning in the 2017-19 biennium tuition is authorized to increase by the average annual growth rate in median hourly wages.

Summary of Bill: Tuition at community and technical colleges is reduced by 10 percent in the 2018-19 academic year. Beginning with the 2018 supplemental budget, the Legislature must appropriate an amount at least equal to the 2017-19 biennial budget allocation, as well as state funds for the net revenue loss from the tuition reduction to resident undergraduate operating fees.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 26, 2018.

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

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