

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1572

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
College & Workforce Development

**Title:** An act relating to the helping homeless college students act.

**Brief Description:** Concerning homeless college students.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Ortiz-Self, Young, Pettigrew, Davis, Ryu, Stonier, Dolan, Sells, Peterson, Riccelli, Kilduff, Pollet, Kloba, Stanford, Tarleton, Fey, Wylie, Appleton, Lovick, Gregerson, Ramos, Thai, Valdez, Bergquist, Doglio, Goodman, Jinkins, Lekanoff, Slatter, Ormsby, Frame, Macri and Leavitt.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

College & Workforce Development: 1/30/19, 2/8/19 [DP].

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Creates pilot programs at the community and technical colleges and the four-year higher education institutions to provide assistance to homeless students and students who were in foster care.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COLLEGE & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Hansen, Chair; Entenman, Vice Chair; Leavitt, Vice Chair; Bergquist, Paul, Pollet, Ramos, Sells and Slatter.

**Minority Report:** Without recommendation. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Gildon, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Kraft, Rude, Sutherland and Young.

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

**Staff:** Megan Mulvihill (786-7304).

**Background:**

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*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.*

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (State Board) is the state agency charged with coordinating and advocating on behalf of the state's 34 community and technical colleges (CTCs). The CTCs are located in 30 college districts across the state. The CTCs have open door policies, and their purpose is to provide comprehensive education and training that meets the needs of the community, basic skills and literacy education, and apprenticeship opportunities.

The Student Achievement Council (Council) is the state agency tasked with providing strategic planning, oversight, and advocacy to support increased student success and higher levels of educational attainment. The Council is responsible for authorizing degree-granting institutions, administering the state's financial aid programs, setting minimum college admission standards, and providing research and policy recommendations.

Homeless often refers to a condition where an individual lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) includes several questions to help postsecondary institutions determine if a student is homeless. The postsecondary institution then needs to verify a student's status, such as through documentation provided by a shelter or through a financial aid administrator.

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### **Summary of Bill:**

The State Board and the Council must both establish pilot programs to provide assistance and accommodations to students experiencing homelessness and to students who were in foster care when they graduated high school. The State Board's pilot program must include four college districts, with two on each side of the Cascade Mountains. The Council's pilot program must include two four-year higher education institutions, one on each side of the Cascade Mountains. The CTCs and institutions chosen to participate must provide accommodations to homeless students and students who were in foster care at high school graduation. The accommodations may include:

- access to laundry facilities, storage, locker rooms and showers, and technology;
- reduced-price meals or meal plans;
- access to short-term housing or housing assistance, especially during seasonal breaks; and
- case management services.

The CTCs and institutions may also establish plans to develop surplus property for affordable housing.

The pilot programs must both report to the Legislature by December 1, 2023. The reports must include data on the number of students experiencing homelessness and those who were in the foster care system at high school graduation, the number of students assisted, and strategies and recommendations on how to better serve these students. The pilot programs expire July 1, 2023.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Preliminary fiscal note available.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) In the K-12 system, students who are homeless have the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act, and this takes it a step farther into college. This helps level the playing field for these students by establishing pilot programs that explore what the state is missing and how easy it is to implement. This is an opportunity for colleges to identify need and implement strategies for students experiencing homelessness and in foster care. It would provide the Legislature with information on ways to support these students. Rural students' needs are different and often not met by community resources. This would help identify best-practices for different types of campuses.

The bill should include higher education liaisons for homeless and foster care students. The liaisons could be existing staff members and have no cost. They could provide information about campus support programs and community resources. They would help students enroll in and graduate from college. There needs to be holistic and integrated supports.

Higher education participation is life changing. This bill helps students achieve the college dream by providing access to the necessary resources. Many people have too much pride to reach out for support or they do not know how to ask for help. To be hungry is indescribable. Access to meal plans is vital. Everything is online, so technology access is also vital. The library is the only place to access electricity to plug in a phone or have access to the Internet to get a job. There are no breaks while living on the streets.

One of the biggest issues on campus is a lack of mechanisms to collect data on homelessness. Nearly 10 percent of students have experienced homelessness and an even greater number have experienced food insecurity. One out of 10 students is in an unstable living situation, but the colleges do not have specifics about what this means. Tacoma Community College in 2016 had a homeless rate of 27 percent. At the University of Washington Tacoma, 14 percent of the campus is homeless, which equals 750 students.

The bill is not trying to create any undue hardships to the institutions, just asking them to open up access. Colleges strive to support students, but the impact is limited by resources. Almost all of the colleges have food pantries funded by staff, families, and other sources.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) The institutions already provide a lot of these resources to students, but it takes a partnership with the Legislature to provide adequate funding for additional resources.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support) Representative Ortiz-Self, prime sponsor; Katara Jordan, Building Changes; Charles Adkins, Geoduck Student Union; Dani Trimble, Lower Columbia

College; Erin Frasier, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; Mary Tate; Randell Dobbs; Eli Cortes; Jim Minkler, Grays Harbor College; and Adán Espino Jr.

(Other) Cody Eccles, Council of Presidents.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.