

FINAL BILL REPORT

2SSB 5433

C 397 L 19
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Providing postsecondary education opportunities to enhance public safety.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Wilson, C., Nguyen, Das, Darneille, Dhingra, Hasegawa, Kuderer and Saldaña).

Senate Committee on Human Services, Reentry & Rehabilitation
Senate Committee on Ways & Means
House Committee on College & Workforce Development

Background: Department of Corrections (DOC) contracts with the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) to provide basic education and job training within each of the state's 12 adult prisons. Each adult prison offers adult basic education programs, which provide foundational education in reading, writing, math, and the English language, including general education development preparation programs. Several of these adult prisons also offer High School 21+, a competency-based high school diploma program. With High School 21+, students can earn high school credits by proving they have mastered required subjects through past education or life experience. Students then take classes to fill in the gaps and earn a high school diploma. Job-search and anger management courses are also available at every prison.

In 2017, the Legislature expanded educational opportunities in the state prison system to include associate degree programs. Under this law, education opportunities in the state prison system are limited to basic adult education, associate degree programs, and vocational training. Incarcerated adults sentenced to life without parole, the death penalty, or who are deportable aliens are excluded from earning an associate degree. DOC must prioritize its resources to meet goals for inmates that relate to obtaining basic adult educational skills, vocational skills, and programs that are in compliance with an offender's individual reentry plan. DOC is prohibited from using its base appropriation for any postsecondary education degree program other than an associate degree or vocational training.

Summary: Subject to appropriations, DOC, the SBCTC, and the Office of the Chief Information Officer must submit a report to the Governor and the Legislature by December 1, 2019, outlining a plan addressing:

- implementing secure Internet connections to achieve the purposes of this act;
- the barriers and costs associated with implementing secure Internet connections for the purpose of postsecondary education and training of incarcerated individuals;

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.

- a review of the fiscal impacts, including any estimated capital and operating costs associated with expanding current educational opportunities to include providing postsecondary education degree opportunities and training to incarcerated adults through expanded partnerships between the community and technical colleges and DOC; and
- a plan for implementing the expansion of postsecondary education degree opportunities, specifying the estimated period of time necessary for implementation, within the estimated costs associated with the identified fiscal impacts.

DOC may conduct a proof of concept pilot at one correctional institution for a new secure Internet connection for offender postsecondary education. Results of the proof of concept pilot must be used to inform the report required in this act. The section for the report expires December 31, 2019.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	36	11	
House	67	28	(House amended)
Senate	32	10	(Senate concurred)

Effective: July 28, 2019