

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1601

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

**Title:** An act relating to expanding the students experiencing homelessness and foster youth pilot program.

**Brief Description:** Expanding the students experiencing homelessness and foster youth pilot program.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Leavitt, Caldier, Ryu, Corry, Taylor, Slatter, Eslick, Thai, Chopp, Johnson, J., Fitzgibbon, Robertson, Wicks, Bateman, Simmons, Duerr, Sells, Berg, Walen, Graham, Paul, Gregerson, Callan, Fey, Peterson, Ramos, Rule, Santos, Wylie, Sullivan, Bergquist, Tharinger, Pollet, Griffey, Dolan, Riccelli, Ormsby, Frame, Young and Hackney.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

College & Workforce Development: 1/10/22, 1/13/22 [DP].

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Changes the Homeless and Foster Care Students Pilot Program to a permanent program.
- Allows any community and technical college to participate in the Homeless and Foster Care Students Pilot Program.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COLLEGE & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Slatter, Chair; Entenman, Vice Chair; Leavitt, Vice Chair; Hansen, Paul, Pollet and Sells.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Chambers, Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Hoff and Kraft.

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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 part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

**Minority Report:** Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Sutherland.

**Staff:** Elizabeth Allison (786-7129).

**Background:**

In 2019 the Legislature created the Homeless and Foster Care Students Pilot Program (Pilot Program) 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 for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) was directed to select four community and technical colleges (CTCs) to participate in the Pilot Program, and the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) was directed to select two baccalaureate institutions to participate in the Pilot Program. In 2021 the Legislature expanded the number of colleges participating in the Pilot Program to eight CTCs and four baccalaureate institutions.

Services provided to students in the Pilot Program include:

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

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

Participating colleges must provide a joint report to the Legislature.

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**Summary of Bill:**

The Pilot Program is changed to a permanent program and allows all CTCs to participate.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**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) College students struggle with housing and food insecurity, and face homelessness and other well-being threats that can prohibit them from completing degrees or certificates. These are students right out of high school or coming back for job retraining because of job loss. Over half of all students in community and technical colleges has food insecurity. The bill proposes a solution by expanding the existing Pilot Programs to help two vulnerable populations: homeless students, and students who were in foster care. Students of color are disproportionately affected by these issues. There is a significant demand for workers and many will need some form of post-secondary education. The existing program provides basic needs to help students with stability.

The existing Pilot Program has saved lives. There are 63 participating students at South Puget Sound Community College, which has a master lease with an apartment complex that allows them to furnish and equip students experiencing homelessness and those who were in foster care. The retention rate for students participating in the program is around 76 percent fall to fall, which is nearly double than the number of non-participating students. After COVID-19, even more students sought help. Students should not be defined by their struggles. The waitlist at Tacoma Community College has increased although the college is serving over 300 students. The bill could allow more opportunities to help even more students who need it.

This legislation will make great strides for housing and food insecure students, but more can be done. Some four-year institutions are participating in the Pilot Program, but it needs to be expanded to include all four-year institutions. Four-year institutions do have more resources than CTCs to some extent, but not enough. Last year, the number of institutions participating in the Pilot Program was doubled, and in that short time, the number of students helped has grown exponentially. Statewide implementation is a good next step in eliminating housing and other barriers. It is in the collective best interest to give students every opportunity to graduate.

Homelessness causes trauma, and it is important to lessen that trauma by providing support for students after high school.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Representative Mari Leavitt, prime sponsor; Cynthia Stewart, League of Women Voters of Washington; Zackary Turner and Alexis Hanson, Washington Student Association; Melissa Littleton and Jessica Porter, Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; Timothy Stokes and Austin Herrera, South Puget Sound Community College; Drayton Jackson, Foundation for Homeless and Poverty Management; Sequoia Dolan; and Mason Green, Associated Students of the University of Washington.

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