

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## EHB 1687

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As of February 25, 2022

**Title:** An act relating to enhancing the college bound scholarship program by increasing opportunities for students to attend community and technical colleges.

**Brief Description:** Enhancing the college bound scholarship program by increasing opportunities for students to attend community and technical colleges.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Bergquist, Leavitt, Ramel, Sells, Johnson, J., Bateman, Valdez, Paul, Callan, Davis, Goodman, Gregerson, Taylor, Ramos, Santos, Sullivan, Riccelli, Harris-Talley, Hackney and Kloba.

**Brief History:** Passed House: 2/12/22, 84-14.

**Committee Activity:** Higher Education & Workforce Development: 2/22/22, 2/24/22 [DP-WM].

Ways & Means: 2/26/22.

### Brief Summary of Bill

- Eliminates the grade point average requirement for all students other than those seeking direct admission to a public or private four-year institution of higher education.
- Requires the Education Research and Data Center to annually send College Bound Scholarship data submitted by the institutions of higher education to the Washington Student Achievement Council.

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## SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

**Majority Report:** Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Randall, Chair; Nobles, Vice Chair; Holy, Ranking Member; Liias and Sefzik.

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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.*

**Staff:** Alicia Kinne-Clawson (786-7407)

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## SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

**Staff:** Michele Alishahi (786-7433)

**Background:** The College Bound Scholarship Program (CBS) was established in 2007 to provide guaranteed four-year tuition to 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, eighth grade, or in certain circumstances, ninth grade; or
- are independent 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.

Beginning in the seventh grade, eligible students are automatically enrolled in the CBS by the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC). Students and parents are notified of the student's eligibility and the scholarship's requirements. To receive the CBS, a student must graduate from high school with at least a C grade point average, have no felony convictions, and have a family income that does not exceed 65 percent of the state median family income.

**Summary of Bill:** For CBS eligible students enrolling in a postsecondary education institution for the first time beginning with the 2022-23 academic year, a C grade point average is required only for those students seeking direct admission to a public or private four-year institution of higher education.

Additional data points on grade point averages are added to the information that higher education institutions must submit to the Education Research and Data Center (ERDC). The ERDC must annually send the CBS data submitted by the higher education institutions to WSAC beginning with July 1, 2023. WSAC must submit an annual legislative report on the CBS data beginning November 1, 2023.

**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 (Higher Education & Workforce Development):**

PRO: If we can make sure that students are still qualified for the college bound program, despite their GPA, we can help make sure they get that degree. This will help our students achieve and make a dent in the gap of students self-selecting out of higher education. Washington has a very serious problem with students dis-engaging after high school. College Bound is a modest effort toward improving that. It's an effort at increasing direct enrollment. We think it should apply to all graduates. We aren't going to make our attainment goals by focusing on the students already on track to go. As students who suffered through the Covid-19 pandemic, we think this bill will give students a second chance. This bill would be great for students in my position who would appreciate the opportunity.

**Persons Testifying (Higher Education & Workforce Development):** PRO: Representative Steve Bergquist, Prime Sponsor; Marc Webster, Washington Student Achievement Council; Averi Evans.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Higher Education & Workforce Development):** No one.