

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5079

As Reported by House Committee On:
Postsecondary Education & Workforce

Title: An act relating to the date by which tuition operating fees are established.

Brief Description: Concerning the date by which tuition operating fees are established.

Sponsors: Senators Braun, Lias, Boehnke, Dozier, Holy, King, Mullet, Muzzall, Saldaña, Schoesler, Wagoner and Wellman.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Postsecondary Education & Workforce: 3/10/23, 3/17/23 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Office of Financial Management to calculate, and transmit to institutions of higher education, the maximum annual increase in tuition operating fees for resident undergraduates every year by October 1.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION & WORKFORCE

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Slatter, Chair; Entenman, Vice Chair; Reed, Vice Chair; Ybarra, Ranking Minority Member; Waters, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Hansen, Jacobsen, Klicker, Leavitt, McEntire, Paul, Schmidt and Timmons.

Staff: Saranda Ross (786-7068)

Background:

Tuition operating fees for resident undergraduates at institutions of higher education,

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excluding certain applied baccalaureate degrees, may not increase above the average annual percentage rate in the median hourly wage for Washington for the previous 14 years as the wage is determined by The Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics. Institutions of higher education are the state universities, the regional universities, The Evergreen State College, and the community and technical colleges.

Summary of Bill:

Requires the Office of Financial Management to calculate the maximum increase in tuition operating fees for resident undergraduates at institutions of higher education, excluding certain applied baccalaureate degrees, and transmit that information to the institutions by October 1 of each year for the following academic year.

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) In 2015 Washington was the only state to lower community college tuition in a significant way. An important step taken in that legislation was also setting the rate at which tuition can increase so as not to get ahead of what students can afford. But the timing of that calculation needs improvement because universities struggle to offer certainty to students about tuition. That is, universities must estimate tuition costs because they do not have final numbers until March of each year. This bill moves that calculation from March to October of the preceding year, so students and families have the important data they need to make informed decisions and better prepare for the costs of tuition. With tuition determined earlier, financial aid packages can also be provided sooner than the current system provides because tuition determines financial aid.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator John Braun, prime sponsor; Ruben Flores, Council Of Presidents; Collin Bannister, Associated Students of Washington State University; Jacob Vigdor, University of Washington Council of Faculty; and Madeline Sprute, Associated Students of Tacoma Community College.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.