

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5687

As Passed House:

April 12, 2023

Title: An act relating to creating and supporting postsecondary wrestling grant programs.

Brief Description: Creating and supporting postsecondary wrestling grant programs.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senator Van De Wege).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Postsecondary Education & Workforce: 3/15/23, 3/17/23 [DP];

Appropriations: 3/30/23, 4/1/23 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 4/12/23, 80-17.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Creates a postsecondary wrestling grant program.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION & WORKFORCE

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Slatter, Chair; Entenman, Vice Chair; Reed, Vice Chair; Ybarra, Ranking Minority Member; Waters, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Hansen, Leavitt, Paul and Timmons.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Jacobsen and McEntire.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Klicker and Schmidt.

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: Saranda Ross (786-7068)

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 19 members: Representatives Ormsby, Chair; Bergquist, Vice Chair; Gregerson, Vice Chair; Macri, Vice Chair; Berg, Chopp, Couture, Davis, Fitzgibbon, Hansen, Harris, Lekanoff, Pollet, Riccelli, Ryu, Senn, Simmons, Slatter and Tharinger.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Stokesbary, Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Connors, Dye, Rude, Sandlin and Schmick.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Steele.

Staff: Kate Henry (786-7349).

Background:

The Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) is a state agency created in 2012 that works to raise educational attainment through strategic engagement, program management, and partnerships. The Office of Student Financial Assistance was established within WSAC. This office directs the Washington College Grant and other scholarships that provide incentives for improvements to increased access and success in postsecondary education.

The National Collegiate Wrestling Association (NCWA) is the governing body that the wrestling teams of the University of Washington, Washington State University, Western Washington University, and Central Washington University compete under. Eastern Washington University's wrestling team is not registered with NCWA and The Evergreen State College does not have a wrestling team.

Summary of Bill:

Subject to appropriations, a postsecondary wrestling grant program is created to provide funding to the public two- and four-year institutions of higher education to establish or maintain intercollegiate wrestling programs. Grant funds may be used for purposes such as one-time start-up costs, equipment, and student scholarships. The WSAC administers the program, establishes the minimum criteria for institutions to be awarded a grant, and awards grants based on a competitive process.

This legislation shall be known as the Charles Cate II Act.

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 (Postsecondary Education & Workforce):

(In support) Wrestling is a technical, individual sport that builds character. Washington used to be a wrestling powerhouse but despite the significant increase in women's wrestling, many programs have died out. This is particularly unfortunate for graduating high school students who want to continue their wrestling career in college but have very limited options to do so. This bill will make a positive impact not only on college students but also high school students. Title IX was not the reason wrestling died out, it was because football took over. This bill will help increase the amount of teachers and coaches, as 45 to 75 percent of college wrestlers go on to coach. In addition to increasing student enrollment, successful athletic programs such as wrestling build student life, give students a sense of belonging, and support student retention and diversity, equity, and inclusion. Student athletes also graduate at a higher rate.

(Opposed) None.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Appropriations):

(In support) Students will be able to achieve their goals and aspirations while participating in athletics. An in-state program will give Washington residents wanting to stay close to family an option to continue participating in athletics while achieving a degree. Providing postsecondary opportunities for student athletes in wrestling programs provides for social, financial, and economic mobility.

Wrestling programs will be added at The Evergreen State College in the fall of 2023, making the institution the only four-year institution with an intercollegiate wrestling program. The wrestling community is large at the high school level; approximately 7,000 men and 3,000 women participate in wrestling in Washington. Increasing resources and creating a pipeline for high school coaches to expand the wrestling community in Washington will be appreciated. A majority of high school coaches were collegiate wrestlers and many higher education institutions have cut their programs. The bill allows for students to continue participating in a sport they love while being able to pursue postsecondary education in Washington.

(Opposed) The bill provides targeted funding for The Evergreen State College, since they are the only collegiate program. The timing of this program is not appropriate.

Persons Testifying (Postsecondary Education & Workforce): Senator Kevin Van De Wege, prime sponsor; Amari Brown and Sandy Kaiser, The Evergreen State College;

Randall Tomaras, Restore University Wrestling; and AJ Johnson.

Persons Testifying (Appropriations): (In support) Amari Brown and Sandy Kaiser, The Evergreen State College; Randall Tomaras, Restore University Wrestling in Washington State; and Sally Roberts, Wrestle Like A Girl.

(Opposed) Eric Pratt.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Postsecondary Education & Workforce): None.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Appropriations): None.