

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESSB 5702

As Passed House - Amended:

April 5, 2023

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: Senate Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Development (originally sponsored by Senators Trudeau, Nobles, Dhingra, Hunt, Liias, Lovelett, Nguyen, Pedersen, Saldaña, Valdez and Wilson, C.).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Appropriations: 3/15/23, 3/22/23 [DPA].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 4/5/23, 59-39.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill (As Amended by House)

- Removes the expiration date for the Students Experiencing Homelessness Program (Program).
- Expands the Program to allow all public four-year institutions and community and technical colleges to establish a program.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

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

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.

Springer, Stonier and Tharinger.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Stokesbary, Ranking Minority Member; Chambers, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Corry, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Connors, Couture, Dye, Harris, Rude, Sandlin, Schmick and Steele.

Staff: Kate Henry (786-7349).

Background:

In 2019 Second Substitute Senate Bill 5800 established pilot programs 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 (State Board) established pilot programs at four college districts, with two on each side of the Cascade Mountains. The Student Achievement Council (Council) chose Eastern Washington University and Western Washington University to establish pilot programs.

The participating community and technical colleges (CTCs) and four-year institutions must provide accommodations to homeless students and students who were in foster care at high school graduation. The accommodations may include:

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

The pilot program sites varied in the way accommodations were provided. Participating institutions must provide a joint report to the Legislature by December 1, 2023.

In 2021 Substitute House Bill 1166 expanded the Students Experiencing Homelessness Program to include two additional four-year institutions, one on each side of the Cascade Mountains. The pilot is expanded at CTCs for four additional sites. The total CTC sites must have no less than four locations outside the Puget Sound region. The pilot program's expiration date was extended to July 1, 2024, from July 1, 2023.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The expiration date for the Program is removed. The Council may choose all six public four-year institutions and the State Board may choose all 34 community and technical colleges to establish a program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Making the Students Experiencing Homelessness Program (Program) permanent is necessary to serve students. The data has shown success for the pilot program. The Legislature has continued to fund a program that is working. A student's focus shifts from school and homework when facing insecurity about basic needs including sleeping arrangements, showers, and food. Postsecondary education will be more accessible by making the pilot program permanent.

Students experiencing homelessness are less likely to continue their studies and more likely to drop out of higher education than students not experiencing housing insecurity. Over 2,200 students have been served in the last two academic quarters. Students receiving assistance have completed their quarter at a high completion rate.

Leveraging the strengths of community colleges, housing authorities, and nonprofit organizations, a grant program is included to offer students housing vouchers. The housing voucher program would assist formerly incarcerated students in finding housing and continuing their education. Approximately one in ten students experienced homelessness last year; the voucher program will assist in reaching more students. The grant program for housing vouchers fits within the scope of the pilot program. Additional funding specifically for housing services would relieve pressure on the limited funds available.

A core function of the pilot program is providing case management services and direct support to students. Case managers support first-generation students afraid to fill out forms or ask for assistance. Connecting students to the resources available to them should be prioritized at all public colleges.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Yasmin Trudeau, prime sponsor; Joel Anderson, University of Washington Graduate and Professional Student Senate; Madeline Sprute, Associated Students of Tacoma Community College; Jennifer Dellinger, Jacob Katz, and Baydaa Alshatee, Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; and Charles Adkins.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.