

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5687

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As of February 15, 2023

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

**Brief Description:** Creating postsecondary wrestling grant programs.

**Sponsors:** Senator Van De Wege.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Higher Education & Workforce Development: 2/15/23.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Creates a grant program to fund intercollegiate wrestling program start ups, equipment, and student scholarships to be awarded by the Washington Student Achievement Council.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

**Staff:** Megan Tudor (786-7478)

**Background:** Washington Student Achievement Council. The Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) was created in 2012, to provide focus and propose goals for increasing educational attainment, including improving student transitions from secondary to postsecondary education and training, and between and among postsecondary institutions. The Office of Student Financial Assistance was established within WSAC. This office directs the Washington College Grant and other scholarships, including, but not limited to those programs that provide incentives for improvements related to increased access and success in postsecondary education.

Cascade Collegiate Conference. In 1978, the Cascade Collegiate Conference (CCC) was established comprised of colleges and universities in Idaho and Oregon. The CCC expanded

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its membership to also include colleges and universities in Arizona, California, Montana, and British Columbia. The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) is the governing body of small athletics programs at the national level, dedicated to character-driven intercollegiate athletics since 1937. Each year more than 77,000 NAIA student-athletes have the opportunity to participate in college sports, earn scholarships, and compete for the chance to participate in 28 national championships. Washington currently does not have any colleges or universities participating in the CCC due to the lack of non-club wrestling programs within the state.

**Summary of Bill:** Subject to appropriations, a grant program to support start-up of intercollegiate wrestling programs at the public two and four-year institutions of higher education is created. The grant program is administered by WSAC. Approved uses of funds include start up, equipment, and student scholarships.

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

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on February 16, 2023.

**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:** PRO: This bill aims to incentivize institutions to start, or start back up, wrestling programs and provide opportunities for Washington high school graduates to wrestle during their time at a post-secondary institution. Wrestling is a technical sport and it can be unsafe to have a coach that does not have prior experience with the sport. About 50% of students that participate in a post-secondary wrestling program will return to coach high school programs and 25% will teach as well as coach wrestling for high school. Due to a lack of wrestling programs at post-secondary institutions there are fewer coaches for this sport. The Evergreen State College (Evergreen) recommends adding language that would make post-secondary institutions with currently existing wrestling programs eligible to receive funding from this grant. Evergreen will be adding men's and women's wrestling programs beginning fall term 2023, which will establish the only intercollegiate wrestling program at a four year institution in Washington. They are looking forward to providing this opportunity for students looking to wrestle at the collegiate level. Successful athletics programs can increase enrollment, improve student retention, help to build student life on campus, and student athletes graduate at higher rates than the institution average. For student athletes looking to continue competing in wrestling with a two or four year institution, traveling out-of-state to attend school is not an option due to the high costs. Helping to fund wrestling programs at Washington institutions will support students as they achieve their goals and aspirations.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Kevin Van De Wege, Prime Sponsor; Sandy Kaiser, The Evergreen State College; Amari Brown, The Evergreen State College.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.