

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5542

As Passed Senate, March 6, 2025

Title: An act relating to tuition waivers for high school completers at community and technical colleges.

Brief Description: Expanding tuition waivers for high school completers at community and technical colleges.

Sponsors: Senators Boehnke, Slatter, Hasegawa, Nobles, Ramos and Valdez; by request of State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education & Workforce Development: 2/06/25, 2/10/25 [DP].

Floor Activity: Passed Senate: 3/6/25, 49-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Eliminates the requirement that a student be 19 years of age or older to be eligible for a High School Completion Program tuition and fee waiver.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Nobles, Chair; Hansen, Vice Chair; Warnick, Ranking Member; Boehnke and Slatter.

Staff: Kellee Gunn (786-7429)

Background: Waiver for High School Completion Programs at Community and Technical

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.

Colleges. Community and technical colleges (CTCs) may waive all or a portion of tuition, and services and activities (S&A) fees for resident students 19 years of age or older who are enrolled in a High School Completion Program.

CTCs may also waive all or a portion of the difference between resident tuition and non-resident tuition for non-resident students enrolled in a High School Completion Program.

The waiver is only for courses which lead to a high school diploma or certificate.

Summary of Bill: The requirement that a student in a High School Completion Program be 19 years of age or older to qualify for a tuition and fee waiver is eliminated.

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: PRO: CTCs can transform lives. Students' lives have been lifted through the opportunities at CTCs. This bill removes an arbitrary barrier. Getting a high school diploma is important. In my decade teaching at a CTC, I realize the importance of this. The CTCs really help lift up the community.

This is a revenue neutral bill.

In July of 2023, the board of trustees approved a tuition waiver for my school for high school completers. This allows students to work on their high school diploma while also working on their associates degree. This waiver has really helped enrollment and persistence. This would ensure all eligible students access the waiver.

I dropped out of high school 43 years ago. And I have had that regret ever since. This program gave me the foundation to do that and am now halfway through my associates degree.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Matt Boehnke, Prime Sponsor; Troy Goracke, Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; Sarah Stiffler, Spokane Community College; Rick Anderson.

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