

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESSB 6313

As Reported By House Committee On:
Higher Education

Title: An act relating to the waiver of higher education tuition and fees for state employees at public institutions of higher education.

Brief Description: Waiving tuition and fees for certain state employees.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Senators Rinehart, Bauer, Kohl, Drew and Sheldon).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 2/16/96, 2/20/96 [DPA].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Carlson, Chairman; Mulliken, Vice Chairman; Jacobsen, Ranking Minority Member; Mason, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Basich; Benton; Blanton; Delvin; Goldsmith; Mastin; Scheuerman and Sheahan.

Staff: Suzi Morrissey (786-7120)

Background: Most full-time nonacademic employees in public institutions of higher education are members of the civil service system.

In 1993, the Legislature gave higher education classified employees the opportunity to opt out of the civil service system. Classified employees can currently choose to have their relationships and corresponding obligations governed by the Public Employees' Collective Bargaining Act, as administered by the Public Employees Relations Commission.

The governing boards of the state higher education institutions may waive all or a portion of tuition and fees for classified state employees enrolled on a space-available basis. Those individuals who choose to opt out of the state civil service system are not eligible for tuition waivers under the statute.

Summary of Amended Bill: Institutions of higher education in Washington may waive all or part of tuition and fees for eligible state employees enrolled on a space-available basis. Eligible state employees are people permanently employed half-time or more (1) in classified service under the state civil service law; (2) through the Public Employees' Collective Bargaining Act; or (3) in technical colleges as classified employees and exempt paraprofessionals. Eligible state employees also include nonacademic employees and members of the faculties or instructional staffs employed half-time or more at public colleges and universities. These students will not be included in official enrollment counts, and no state funds will be distributed to the colleges for their enrollment.

Amended Bill Compared to Engrossed Substitute Bill: The definition of state employee is revised to include nonacademic employees in technical colleges and members of the faculties or instructional staffs at public colleges and universities. In order to qualify for a waiver, state employees must be employed at least half-time instead of full-time.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: This bill corrects an unintended consequence of the legislation that permits state employees to opt out of the civil service system. It also allows technical college staff to participate in the waiver program.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Kim Cook, Director, Classified Staff Association, State Employees Union (pro); Grace Carlson, Office Assistant III, University of Washington (pro); Bob Edie, University of Washington (pro); Sherry Appleton, State Employees Union (pro); Wendy Rader-Konofalski, Washington Federation of Teachers (pro); Gayle Hassinger, Lake Washington Technical College (pro); and Scott Willcoxon, Lake Washington Technical College (pro).