

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5288

As of February 3, 1995

Title: An act relating to the Washington scholars program.

Brief Description: Revising provisions for the Washington scholars program.

Sponsors: Senators Wood, Sheldon, Bauer, Kohl and Rasmussen; by request of Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 2/6/95.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

Background: The Washington Scholars Program was created by the Legislature in 1981. One purpose of the program is to recognize and honor the accomplishments of three outstanding high school seniors from each legislative district. Scholars are selected on the basis of outstanding academic achievement, leadership, and community service.

In 1984, the Legislature provided a mandatory waiver of tuition and fees for Washington scholars who choose to attend a public college or university for undergraduate studies. In 1988, the Legislature provided a cash grant for Washington scholars who choose to attend an independent college or university for undergraduate studies. In 1993, the waivers provided to Washington scholars to attend a public institution were made permissive.

Under current law, a student selected as a Washington scholar is eligible to receive a tuition and fee waiver, or a cash grant, depending upon when the student was selected and which institution the student chooses to attend.

Washington scholars selected before June 30, 1994, who choose to attend an in-state public college or university are eligible to receive a mandatory waiver of tuition and fees for undergraduate studies. Washington scholars selected after June 30, 1994, who choose to attend in-state public colleges and universities, are eligible to receive a waiver of tuition and fees for undergraduate studies, but the governing board of the institution has the option of providing full, partial, or no waiver to the student.

Washington scholars who choose to attend in-state independent colleges and universities are eligible to receive a grant for undergraduate studies, if funds are available. The grant is also contingent on the school agreeing to match the amount of the state-provided grant, either with actual money or by a waiver. Individual grants cannot exceed the amount of undergraduate tuition and fees in effect at the research universities.

Summary of Bill: Washington scholars who receive the award after June 30, 1994, are eligible to receive a cash grant for undergraduate study at either in-state independent or public institutions, if the money is appropriated.

Several clarifications are made to current law. Scholars named before June 30, 1994, continue to receive mandatory waivers for undergraduate studies at public institutions. Grants made to students who choose to attend an independent institution are contingent on the institution matching the state provided grant. The waiver or grant can only be used at an in-state institution. Students who receive the award may transfer among in-state institutions and continue to receive award benefits.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on July 1, 1995.