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SENATE BILL 5820

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State of Washington                      65th Legislature                      2017 Regular Session  
By Senators Wilson, Bailey, Rossi, and Zeiger

1            AN ACT Relating to financial assistance; amending RCW 28B.92.060;  
2 and creating a new section.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4            NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 1.**    The legislature finds that in 2017, an  
5 estimated twenty-four thousand students are eligible for the state  
6 need grant, but will remain unserved due to lack of funding. The  
7 legislature recognizes that because not enough funds are available to  
8 fully fund the state need grant for all eligible students, the state  
9 should tailor the way funds are awarded to the amount of funds  
10 available. The legislature finds that by raising the grade point  
11 average requirements for state need grant awards, funds will be  
12 prioritized toward the most college-ready students in Washington. The  
13 legislature further finds that awarding funds in a way that  
14 incentivizes degree completion and enrollment in high-demand degrees  
15 will prepare students for the state's workforce needs.

16            **Sec. 2.**    RCW 28B.92.060 and 2012 c 229 s 558 are each amended to  
17 read as follows:

18            In awarding need grants, the office shall proceed substantially  
19 as follows: PROVIDED, That nothing contained herein shall be  
20 construed to prevent the office, in the exercise of its sound

1 discretion, from following another procedure when the best interest  
2 of the program so dictates:

3 (1) The office shall annually select the financial aid award  
4 recipients from among Washington residents applying for student  
5 financial aid who have been ranked according to:

6 (a) Financial need as determined by the amount of the family  
7 contribution; and

8 (b) Other considerations, such as whether the student is a former  
9 foster youth, or is a placebound student who has completed an  
10 associate of arts or associate of science degree or its equivalent.

11 (2) The financial need of the highest ranked students shall be  
12 met by grants depending upon the evaluation of financial need until  
13 the total allocation has been disbursed. Funds from grants which are  
14 declined, forfeited or otherwise unused shall be reawarded until  
15 disbursed, except that eligible former foster youth shall be assured  
16 receipt of a grant. (~~The office, in consultation with four-year~~  
17 ~~institutions of higher education, the council, and the state board~~  
18 ~~for community and technical colleges, shall develop award criteria~~  
19 ~~and methods of disbursement based on level of need, and not solely~~  
20 ~~rely on a first-come, first-served basis.)) The omnibus  
21 appropriations act shall specify grant award criteria and methods of  
22 disbursement based on level of need and other factors that promote  
23 degree completion and enrollment in high-demand degrees. When  
24 awarding grants, institutions of higher education must not implement  
25 a first-come, first-served policy unless specifically directed by the  
26 omnibus appropriations act.~~

27 (3)(a) A student shall be eligible to receive a state need grant  
28 for up to five years, or the credit or clock hour equivalent of five  
29 years, or up to one hundred twenty-five percent of the published  
30 length of time of the student's program. A student may not start a  
31 new associate degree program as a state need grant recipient until at  
32 least five years have elapsed since earning an associate degree as a  
33 need grant recipient, except that a student may earn two associate  
34 degrees concurrently.

35 (b)(i) Qualifications for renewal will include maintaining  
36 satisfactory academic progress toward completion of an eligible  
37 program as determined by the office and maintaining the grade point  
38 averages in this subsection, except for those students attending The  
39 Evergreen State College. Students enrolled at The Evergreen State

1 College must meet the requirements of the college's satisfactory  
2 academic progress policy for state financial aid to remain qualified.

3 (A) The minimum grade point average for a student's first renewal  
4 must be at least a 2.25 grade point average.

5 (B) The minimum grade point average for all subsequent renewal  
6 awards must be at least a 2.5 grade point average.

7 (ii) The lost award revenues from students not meeting the  
8 minimum grade point averages in (b)(i) of this subsection shall be  
9 provided to those students who are eligible for a state need grant  
10 award but are currently unserved.

11 (iii) A student is exempt from the grade point average  
12 requirement in (b)(i) of this subsection for one or more of the  
13 following reasons:

14 (A) Because of the birth of a child of the student and in order  
15 to care for the child;

16 (B) Because of the placement of a child with the student for  
17 adoption or foster care;

18 (C) In order to care for a family member of the student if the  
19 family member has a serious health condition as defined in RCW  
20 49.78.020; or

21 (D) Because the student has a serious health condition as defined  
22 in RCW 49.78.020.

23 (c) Should the recipient terminate his or her enrollment for any  
24 reason during the academic year, the unused portion of the grant  
25 shall be returned to the state educational grant fund by the  
26 institution according to the institution's own policy for issuing  
27 refunds, except as provided in RCW 28B.92.070.

28 (4) In computing financial need, the office shall determine a  
29 maximum student expense budget allowance, not to exceed an amount  
30 equal to the total maximum student expense budget at the public  
31 institutions plus the current average state appropriation per student  
32 for operating expense in the public institutions. Any child support  
33 payments received by students who are parents attending less than  
34 half-time shall not be used in computing financial need.

35 (5)(a) A student who is enrolled in three to six credit-bearing  
36 quarter credits, or the equivalent semester credits, may receive a  
37 grant for up to one academic year before beginning a program that  
38 leads to a degree or certificate.

39 (b) An eligible student enrolled on a less-than-full-time basis  
40 shall receive a prorated portion of his or her state need grant for

1 any academic period in which he or she is enrolled on a less-than-  
2 full-time basis, as long as funds are available.

3 (c) An institution of higher education may award a state need  
4 grant to an eligible student enrolled in three to six credit-bearing  
5 quarter credits, or the semester equivalent, on a provisional basis  
6 if:

7 (i) The student has not previously received a state need grant  
8 from that institution;

9 (ii) The student completes the required free application for  
10 federal student aid;

11 (iii) The institution has reviewed the student's financial  
12 condition, and the financial condition of the student's family if the  
13 student is a dependent student, and has determined that the student  
14 is likely eligible for a state need grant; and

15 (iv) The student has signed a document attesting to the fact that  
16 the financial information provided on the free application for  
17 federal student aid and any additional financial information provided  
18 directly to the institution is accurate and complete, and that the  
19 student agrees to repay the institution for the grant amount if the  
20 student submitted false or incomplete information.

21 (6) As used in this section, "former foster youth" means a person  
22 who is at least eighteen years of age, but not more than twenty-four  
23 years of age, who was a dependent of the department of social and  
24 health services at the time he or she attained the age of eighteen.

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