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HOUSE BILL 1950

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State of Washington

66th Legislature

2019 Regular Session

By Representative Hansen

1 AN ACT Relating to the Washington free to finish college program;  
2 amending RCW 28B.76.540; adding a new chapter to Title 28B RCW;  
3 creating a new section; and providing an expiration date.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that there are often  
6 many barriers for students wanting to pursue higher education, such  
7 as cost, competing commitments, and remedial needs. The legislature  
8 also recognizes that in order to meet the state's educational  
9 attainment goal of having at least seventy percent of Washington  
10 adults obtain a postsecondary credential by 2023, more needs to be  
11 done to encourage all types of Washingtonians to pursue higher  
12 education. In addition to encouraging recent high school graduates to  
13 attend a postsecondary institution, the legislature recognizes that  
14 untraditional students are an untapped resource to help fill skilled  
15 workforce demands. The legislature finds that there are many older  
16 adults who attended college, but did not earn a degree because they  
17 withdrew a few credits short of completing their program. The  
18 legislature finds that there are examples of programs, often referred  
19 to as recapture programs, which use outreach and tuition assistance  
20 to entice these adults to return to college to complete their degree.  
21 An example of such a recapture program was Western Washington

1 University's destination graduation program. Destination graduation  
2 helped two hundred twenty-nine students return to Western Washington  
3 University and of those, one hundred eighty-one students graduated.  
4 Therefore, it is the intent of the legislature to create a statewide  
5 recapture program to remove the barriers to reenrollment so these  
6 residents may return to college and complete a degree or certificate  
7 program as they originally intended to do.

8 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The definitions in this section apply  
9 throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires  
10 otherwise.

11 (1) "Free to finish college grant" includes tuition fees as  
12 defined in RCW 28B.15.020 and services and activities fees as defined  
13 in RCW 28B.15.041, less any gift aid received, as defined in RCW  
14 28B.145.010.

15 (2) "Institution of higher education" has the same meaning as in  
16 RCW 28B.10.016.

17 (3) "Office" means the office of student financial assistance  
18 created under chapter 28B.76 RCW.

19 (4) "Resident student" has the same meaning as in RCW  
20 28B.15.012(2) (a) through (e).

21 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) The Washington free to finish college  
22 program is established to encourage Washingtonians who attended a  
23 postsecondary institution, but left a few credits short of  
24 completing, to return to college to finish their degree or  
25 certificate program.

26 (2) A student must meet the following requirements to be eligible  
27 for the Washington free to finish college program:

28 (a) Be a resident of the state;

29 (b) Not have previously earned a postsecondary degree or  
30 certificate;

31 (c) Be admitted to the institution of higher education that the  
32 student last attended two or more years ago;

33 (d) Enroll in the institution of higher education on at least a  
34 part-time basis;

35 (e) Be considered by the institution of higher education to have  
36 satisfactory academic standing; and

37 (f) Submit the free application for federal student aid or the  
38 Washington application for state financial aid.

1 (3) A student who meets the eligibility requirements in this  
2 section may be eligible for a free to finish college grant if the  
3 institution of higher education confirms that the student needs  
4 fifteen quarter credits or less, or the equivalent in semester  
5 credits, to finish his or her postsecondary certificate or degree.

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** (1) The Washington free to finish college  
7 program shall be administered by the office, which may adopt rules  
8 necessary to administer the program.

9 (2) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this  
10 specific purpose, the office, in collaboration with the institutions  
11 of higher education, shall award free to finish college grants to  
12 students who meet the requirements under section 3 of this act. The  
13 free to finish college grant may not result in a reduction of any  
14 federal or state gift aid.

15 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** (1) The Washington state institute for  
16 public policy shall complete an evaluation of the Washington free to  
17 finish college program. The evaluation must include a cost benefit  
18 analysis of the program and an assessment of student support services  
19 provided to program participants, including the effectiveness of the  
20 student support services at helping students complete their degree or  
21 certificate program.

22 (2) The Washington state institute for public policy shall submit  
23 a report on the evaluation to the appropriate policy and fiscal  
24 committees of the legislature by November 1, 2025.

25 (3) This section expires January 1, 2026.

26 **Sec. 6.** RCW 28B.76.540 and 2011 1st sp.s. c 11 s 111 are each  
27 amended to read as follows:

28 In addition to administrative responsibilities assigned in this  
29 chapter, the office shall administer the programs set forth in the  
30 following statutes: RCW 28A.600.100 through 28A.600.150 (Washington  
31 scholars); chapter 28B.85 RCW (degree-granting institutions); chapter  
32 28B.92 RCW (state need grant); chapter 28B.12 RCW (work-study); RCW  
33 28B.15.543 (~~((tuition waivers for Washington scholars))~~) grants for  
34 undergraduate coursework); RCW 28B.15.760 through 28B.15.766 (math  
35 and science loans); RCW 28B.15.100 (reciprocity agreement); RCW  
36 28B.15.730 through 28B.15.734 (Oregon reciprocity); RCW 28B.15.750  
37 (~~(and 28B.15.752)~~) (Idaho reciprocity); RCW 28B.15.756 (British

1 Columbia reciprocity); (~~chapter 28B.101 RCW (educational opportunity~~  
2 ~~grant);~~) chapter 28B.102 RCW (future teachers conditional  
3 scholarship); chapter 28B.108 RCW (American Indian endowed  
4 scholarship); chapter 28B.109 RCW (Washington international exchange  
5 scholarship); chapter 28B.115 RCW (health professional conditional  
6 scholarship); chapter 28B.119 RCW (Washington promise scholarship);  
7 chapter 28B.--- RCW (the new chapter created in section 7 of this  
8 act) (Washington free to finish college program); and chapter 28B.133  
9 RCW (gaining independence for students with dependents).

10 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** Sections 1 through 5 of this act  
11 constitute a new chapter in Title 28B RCW.

12 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 8.** If specific funding for the purposes of  
13 this act, referencing this act by bill or chapter number, is not  
14 provided by June 30, 2019, in the omnibus appropriations act, this  
15 act is null and void.

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