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**SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5288**

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**State of Washington**

**67th Legislature**

**2021 Regular Session**

**By** Senate Higher Education & Workforce Development (originally sponsored by Senators Liiias, Short, Conway, Das, Frockt, Hunt, Lovelett, Nguyen, Nobles, Randall, Saldaña, and Wilson, C.)

READ FIRST TIME 02/05/21.

1 AN ACT Relating to increasing access to the Washington  
2 opportunity scholarship program; and amending RCW 28B.145.010 and  
3 28B.145.100.

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

5 **Sec. 1.** RCW 28B.145.010 and 2019 c 406 s 63 are each amended to  
6 read as follows:

7 The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter  
8 unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

9 (1) "Board" means the opportunity scholarship board.

10 (2) "Council" means the student achievement council.

11 (3) "Eligible advanced degree program" means a health  
12 professional degree program beyond the baccalaureate level and  
13 includes graduate and professional degree programs.

14 (4) "Eligible county" has the same meaning as "rural county" as  
15 defined in RCW 82.14.370 and also includes any county that shares a  
16 common border with Canada and has a population of over one hundred  
17 twenty-five thousand.

18 (5) "Eligible education programs" means high employer demand and  
19 other programs of study as determined by the board.

20 (6) "Eligible expenses" means reasonable expenses associated with  
21 the costs of acquiring an education such as tuition, books,

1 equipment, fees, room and board, and other expenses as determined by  
2 the program administrator in consultation with the council and the  
3 state board for community and technical colleges.

4 (7) "Eligible school district" means a school district of the  
5 second class as identified in RCW 28A.300.065(2).

6 (8) "Eligible student" means a resident student who (~~received~~  
7 ~~his or her high school diploma or high school equivalency certificate~~  
8 ~~as provided in RCW 28B.50.536 in Washington and who~~):

9 (a) (i) (~~Has~~) Received a high school diploma or high school  
10 equivalency certificate as provided in RCW 28B.50.536 in Washington  
11 and who has been accepted at a four-year institution of higher  
12 education into an eligible education program leading to a  
13 baccalaureate degree;

14 (ii) (~~Will~~) Received a high school diploma or high school  
15 equivalency certificate as provided in RCW 28B.50.536 in Washington  
16 and who will attend a two-year institution of higher education and  
17 intends to transfer to an eligible education program at a four-year  
18 institution of higher education;

19 (iii) (~~Has~~) Received a high school diploma or equivalent and  
20 has been accepted at an institution of higher education into a  
21 professional-technical degree program in an eligible education  
22 program;

23 (iv) (~~Has~~) Received a high school diploma or equivalent and has  
24 been accepted at an institution of higher education into a  
25 professional-technical certificate program in an eligible education  
26 program; or

27 (v) Has been accepted at an institution of higher education into  
28 an eligible advanced degree program that leads to credentials in  
29 health professions;

30 (b) Declares an intention to obtain a professional-technical  
31 certificate, professional-technical degree, baccalaureate degree, or  
32 an advanced degree; and

33 (c) Has a family income at or below one hundred twenty-five  
34 percent of the state median family income at the time the student  
35 applies for an opportunity scholarship.

36 (9) "Gift aid" means financial aid received from the federal Pell  
37 grant, the Washington college grant program in chapter 28B.92 RCW,  
38 the college bound scholarship program in chapter 28B.118 RCW, the  
39 opportunity grant program in chapter 28B.50 RCW, or any other state  
40 grant, scholarship, or worker retraining program that provides funds

1 for educational purposes with no obligation of repayment. "Gift aid"  
2 does not include student loans, work-study programs, the basic food  
3 employment and training program administered by the department of  
4 social and health services, or other employment assistance programs  
5 that provide job readiness opportunities and support beyond the costs  
6 of tuition, books, and fees.

7 (10) "High employer demand program of study" has the same meaning  
8 as provided in RCW 28B.50.030.

9 (11) "Participant" means an eligible student who has received a  
10 scholarship under the opportunity scholarship program.

11 (12) "Private sources," "private funds," "private contributions,"  
12 or "private sector contributions" means donations from private  
13 organizations, corporations, federally recognized Indian tribes,  
14 municipalities, counties, and other sources, but excludes state  
15 dollars.

16 (13) "Professional-technical certificate" means a program as  
17 approved by the state board for community and technical colleges  
18 under RCW 28B.50.090(7)(c), that is offered by an institution of  
19 higher education.

20 (14) "Professional-technical degree" means a program as approved  
21 by the state board for community and technical colleges under RCW  
22 28B.50.090(7)(c), that is offered by an institution of higher  
23 education.

24 (15) "Program administrator" means a private nonprofit  
25 corporation registered under Title 24 RCW and qualified as a tax-  
26 exempt entity under section 501(c)(3) of the federal internal revenue  
27 code.

28 (16) "Resident student" has the same meaning as provided in RCW  
29 28B.15.012.

30 (17) "Rural jobs program" means the rural county high employer  
31 demand jobs program created in this chapter.

32 **Sec. 2.** RCW 28B.145.100 and 2018 c 254 s 4 are each amended to  
33 read as follows:

34 (1)(a) The rural county high employer demand jobs program is  
35 created to meet the workforce needs of business and industry in rural  
36 counties by assisting students in earning certificates, associate  
37 degrees, or other industry-recognized credentials necessary for  
38 employment in high employer demand fields.

1 (b) Subject to the requirements of this section, the rural jobs  
2 program provides selected students scholarship funds and support  
3 services, as determined by the board, to help students meet their  
4 eligible expenses when they enroll in a community or technical  
5 college program that prepares them for high employer demand fields.

6 (c) The source of funds for the rural jobs program shall be a  
7 combination of private donations, grants, and contributions and state  
8 matching funds.

9 (2) The program administrator has the duties and responsibilities  
10 provided under this section, including but not limited to:

11 (a) (~~Publicizing~~) Publicize the rural jobs program and  
12 conducting outreach to eligible counties;

13 (b) In consultation with the state board for community and  
14 technical colleges, any interested community or technical college  
15 located in an eligible county, and the county's workforce development  
16 council, identify high employer demand fields within the eligible  
17 counties. When identifying high employer demand fields, the board  
18 must consider:

19 (i) County-specific employer demand reports issued by the  
20 employment security department or the list of statewide high-demand  
21 programs for secondary career and technical education established  
22 under RCW 28A.700.020; and

23 (ii) The ability and capacity of the community and technical  
24 college to meet the needs of qualifying students and industry in the  
25 eligible county;

26 (c) Develop and implement an application, selection, and  
27 notification process for awarding rural jobs program scholarship  
28 funds. In making determinations on scholarship recipients, the board  
29 shall use county-specific employer high-demand data;

30 (d) Determine the annual scholarship fund amounts to be awarded  
31 to selected students;

32 (e) Distribute funds to selected students;

33 (f) Notify institutions of higher education of the rural jobs  
34 program recipients who will attend their institutions of higher  
35 education and inform them of the scholarship fund amounts and terms  
36 of the awards; and

37 (g) Establish and manage an account as provided under RCW  
38 28B.145.110 to receive donations, grants, contributions from private  
39 sources, and state matching funds, and from which to disburse  
40 scholarship funds to selected students.

1 (3) To be eligible for scholarship funds under the rural jobs  
2 program, a student must:

3 (a) Either:

4 (i) Be a resident of an eligible county; or ((have attended and  
5 graduated from a school in an eligible school district))

6 (ii) Have earned a high school diploma or its equivalent from a  
7 school in an eligible school district and enroll in a community or  
8 technical college located in an eligible county;

9 (b) Be a resident student as defined in RCW 28B.15.012;

10 (c) Be enrolled in a community or technical college established  
11 under chapter 28B.50 RCW (~~located in an eligible county~~);

12 (d) Be in a certificate, degree, or other industry-recognized  
13 credential or training program that has been identified by the board  
14 as a program that prepares students for a high employer demand field;

15 (e) Have a family income that does not exceed seventy percent of  
16 the state median family income adjusted for family size; and

17 (f) Demonstrate financial need according to the free application  
18 for federal student aid or the Washington application for state  
19 financial aid.

20 (4) To remain eligible for scholarship funds under the rural jobs  
21 program, the student must maintain a cumulative grade point average  
22 of 2.0.

23 (5) A scholarship award under the rural jobs program may not  
24 result in a reduction of any gift aid. Nothing in this section  
25 creates any right or entitlement.

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