
Higher Education Committee

HB 1428

Brief Description: Establishing the field of dreams program.

Sponsors: Representatives Chandler, Wallace, Bailey, Newhouse, Morrell and Kelley.

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creates the Field of Dreams program, providing college tuition in the form of Guaranteed Education Tuition (GET) credits to students working for agricultural employers.
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Hearing Date: 2/6/09

Staff: Cece Clynch (786-7195)

Background:

Agriculture Industry

Washington state is one of the dominant agricultural states in the United States. It continues to rank first in the production of a wide variety of agricultural products ranging from the well-known apples, pears, and sweet cherries, to the less commonly known products such as wrinkled seed peas, and peppermint and spearmint oil.

GET Program

Washington's Advanced College Tuition Payment Program—known as the Guaranteed Education Tuition (GET) Program—was created in 1998 as Washington's prepaid college tuition program. The GET Program allows purchasers to buy tuition units at current prices for use at a later date. These funds are invested by the State Investment Board and the purchaser is guaranteed that one year's worth of units purchased now will be worth one year's worth of public university tuition in the future. One hundred GET units are equal to one year of resident undergraduate tuition and state-mandated fees at the most expensive public university in Washington.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

WorkSource

WorkSource, with centers throughout the state, helps job seekers:

- find job openings;
- learn strategies for finding a job;
- get job referrals;
- get help preparing a resume and getting ready for a job interview;
- post a resume online for employers to see;
- share job search strategies with others through a job club;
- assess skills and get career guidance;
- get referred to a training program; and
- learn how much jobs pay and what jobs are in demand.

Summary of Bill:

The Field of Dreams program is established to provide college tuition in the form of GET units to students working for agricultural employers. To enroll in the program, participants must:

- meet state residency criteria;
- be 16 through 21 years old;
- be enrolled in high school, have graduated from high school, or hold a General Equivalency Diploma;
- work for a qualified employer in an agricultural job; and,
- register at WorkSource.

For every 350 hours worked for a qualified employer, a student will earn 10 GET units. Students may earn a maximum of 100 GET units.

The Employment Security Department (ESD) will inform WorkSource applicants about the program. Subject to funds appropriated for the specific purpose of the Field of Dreams program, the ESD will manage student enrollment and perform outreach to schools. The ESD is also charged with tracking student hours worked for qualified employers.

The Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) will administer GET units earned through the program. The HECB will also provide annual reports to the fiscal and higher education committees of the House of Representatives and the Senate regarding use of GET units, enrollment, and graduation information.

The HECB, with the ESD, will jointly develop and submit reports to the Legislature by December 1 of 2012, 2014, and 2016 regarding utilization of the program, including demographic, geographic, and income information. The program expires on December 31, 2016.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on August 1, 2009.