
SENATE BILL 5166

State of Washington

66th Legislature

2019 Regular Session

By Senators Hasegawa, Carlyle, Frockt, Palumbo, and Nguyen

Read first time 01/15/19. Referred to Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Development.

1 AN ACT Relating to providing religious accommodations for
2 students at postsecondary educational institutions during exams or
3 other requirements to successfully complete a program; amending RCW
4 28B.10.039; adding a new chapter to Title 28B RCW; and recodifying
5 RCW 28B.10.039.

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

7 **Sec. 1.** RCW 28B.10.039 and 2014 c 168 s 4 are each amended to
8 read as follows:

9 (~~Institutions of higher education~~) (1) Postsecondary
10 educational institutions must develop policies to accommodate student
11 absences for up to two days per academic year, to allow students to
12 take holidays for reasons of faith or conscience or for organized
13 activities conducted under the auspices of a religious denomination,
14 church, or religious organization, so that students' grades are not
15 adversely impacted by the absences.

16 (2) Students' sincerely held religious beliefs and practices must
17 be reasonably accommodated with respect to all examinations and other
18 requirements to successfully complete a program. Instructors may
19 schedule alternative times without prejudicial effect before or after
20 the regularly scheduled examination or other requirement to
21 successfully complete a program. Instructors must accept at face

1 value the sincerity of the students' religious beliefs and both
2 instructors and students must keep requests for accommodation
3 confidential. The postsecondary educational institution must make
4 alternative accommodations for examinations and other requirements to
5 successfully complete a program when:

6 (a) A student's sincerely held religious belief or practice
7 severely affects the student's ability to perform on an examination
8 or meet a requirement to successfully complete a program; and

9 (b) The student has provided written notice within the first two
10 weeks of the beginning of the class of the specific dates the student
11 requests alternative accommodations from the examination or
12 requirement.

13 (3) Postsecondary educational institutions must conspicuously
14 post to their web site:

15 (a) A copy of the postsecondary educational institution's
16 religious accommodations policy, identifying the postsecondary
17 educational institution's point of contact for further information;
18 and

19 (b) A nonexhaustive list of major religious holy days or
20 festivals for the following two academic years.

21 (4) Instructors at each postsecondary educational institution
22 must include in each course syllabus a statement regarding the
23 postsecondary educational institution's religious accommodation
24 policy, including a description of the general procedure to request
25 accommodations and informing students of the point of contact by
26 which they may seek further information about the policy.

27 (5) Postsecondary educational institutions must provide a process
28 for students to notify the Title IX coordinator, or the coordinator's
29 designee, of any grievances with regard to implementation of this
30 section.

31 (6) For the purposes of this section, "postsecondary educational
32 institution" means an institution of higher education as defined in
33 RCW 28B.10.016, a degree-granting institution as defined in RCW
34 28B.85.010, a private vocational school as defined in RCW 28C.10.020,
35 school as defined in RCW 18.16.020, and any entity offering academic
36 credit for an apprenticeship program under RCW 49.04.150.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** RCW 28B.10.039 is recodified as a section
2 in a new chapter in Title 28B RCW.

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