



Making college accessible

Building an economy that works for everyone means making college affordable and accessible for every qualified student. In a state known for its high-tech and engineering industries, House Democrats are committed to improving access and removing barriers to higher education.

PROVIDING STUDENTS WITH MORE OPTIONS

Pilot program for community and technical colleges / HB 2769 - The bill would give the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges the authority to select up to five community or technical colleges to offer programs of study leading to bachelor's degrees in high demand fields like computer science, education, and mental health. Currently, community colleges can offer "applied" bachelor's degrees, which are often treated differently than a regular bachelor's degree when it comes to applying to graduate schools or accreditation. There are just over 1,000 students enrolled in applied bachelor's degree programs in the state's community and technical college system. It has already been determined that Bellevue College will be one of the pilot colleges.

A SECOND SHOT AT YOUR FIRST DEGREE

"Free to Finish" program / HB 2955 – Thousands of Washington students have had to interrupt their studies for a variety of reasons: family issues, employment, or financial constraints. This bill makes a simple commitment: if you don't already have a degree, aren't currently enrolled in college and haven't been enrolled for the last three years, and are 15 credits (one quarter) short of your degree, then we will pay your tuition so you can finish up your degree. Having a degree can mean the difference between living on the margins and career success. We want these students to finish their degrees so they can get better jobs and provide for their families.

REDUCING BARRIERS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Student services for students with disabilities / HB 2825 – This proposal would help create a streamlined, uniform process when students with disabilities transfer between schools. Currently, each institution has its own requirements for documentation, which can lead to confusion, misinformation and a delay in providing core services.

SHIELDING STUDENTS FROM FRAUD AND ABUSE

Protect students from unfair business practices / HB 1949 - This proposal is in response to dire circumstances that have occurred across the nation with the closure of many large private colleges. Thousands of students were defrauded. This bill requires consistent reporting from for-profit schools so prospective students can compare data given by these institutions with the community and technical colleges around the state. This transparency will allow students and their families to make informed decisions about where to go to school and spend their money.

