

Week 6: February 17- February 23, 2014

*House Higher Education Committee*

The House Higher Education Committee held post-cutoff public hearings on two measures that would make significant changes to the State Need Grant Program: [HB 2615](#) would reduce the maximum duration of student eligibility for the State Need Grant from 5 to 4 years and require that students maintain a minimum GPA of 2.75 in order to retain eligibility; and [HB 2619](#), which would replace the current State Need Grant program with a State Need Pay It Forward program and the current College Bound Scholarship program with a College Bound Pay It Forward program.

The Council expressed concerns with both bills in testimony. Regarding HB 2615, the Council is concerned that there could be unintended consequences with making significant changes to the state's largest need-based financial aid program without fully understanding how the changes will impact students and which students would be most impacted. Under current statute, the Council is already tasked with a study and report due in December of the State Need Grant program studying the outcomes of students receiving the SNG award and how those student outcomes impact progress toward meeting the state's educational attainment goals. As part of that study the Council is also asked to provide options for prioritizing SNG awards based on student outcomes, and identify the potential consequences of each option. The Council is concerned with the aspect of HB 2619 converts the existing SNG and College Bound Scholarship programs into repayment programs that obligate low-income students to repay their award. The low-income students impacted under the bill are currently eligible for grants and scholarships, which of course don't require repayment. The concern is that low income student indebtedness would increase since we already know that low-income students *not receiving the SNG* take out more in student loans on average than those with grant assistance.

The Council also testified in support of [SB 5969](#), a measure requiring each public institution of higher education to adopt a policy to award academic credit for military training courses or programs, in the House Higher Education Committee.

*House Labor and Workforce Development Committee*

On Thursday morning, Rachele Sharpe, the Council's Senior Director of Student Financial Assistance, gave a presentation on the status of the Aerospace Loan Program to the House Labor and Workforce Development Committee. The presentation, which was co-presented with Larry Cluphf, Director of the Washington Aerospace Training and Research (WATR) Center at Edmonds Community College, can be found [here](#) and the 2013 Aerospace Loan Program Report to the Legislature can be found [here](#).

*Senate Higher Education Committee*

On Thursday afternoon, the Senate Higher Education Committee held public hearings on House bills that have been passed to the Senate for further legislative consideration. Among the bills heard was [HB 2285](#), requiring the Council to conduct a review of institution higher education policies related to dual credit coursework and report to the Legislature.

*Bill Tracker: Status of Legislation with Direct Alignment to Roadmap Strategies (as of 2/23/14)*

<b>BILL</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>STATUS</b>	<b>SPONSOR</b>
<b>SSB 5969</b>	Academic credit/military	H Hi Ed	O'Ban
<b>SB 6002</b>	Operating sup budget 2014	S Ways & Means	Hill
<b>E2SSB 6552</b>	Student hour and grad reqs	H Education	Rolfes
<b>E2SHB 2383</b>	Career and college readiness	S EL/K-12	Reykdal
<b>SB 6523</b>	Higher ed opportunities	Del to Gov	Bailey
<b>EHB 1011</b>	Military/resident tuition	S Higher Ed	Appleton
<b>HB 2285</b>	Dual credit coursework	S Higher Ed	Orwall
<b>ESHB 2626</b>	Educational attainment goals	S Higher Ed	Seaquist
<b>SB 5318</b>	Military/resident tuition	H Approps	Bailey