

Senate Education Committee

Kat Bourque 271-3091

HB 607-FN-A, establishing a New Hampshire student access grant program and making an appropriation therefor.

Hearing Date: April 4, 2017

Time Opened: 9:44 a.m.

Time Closed: 10:24 a.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Watters, Ward, Reagan and Kahn

Members of the Committee Absent: Senator Giuda

Bill Analysis: This bill establishes the New Hampshire student access grant program.

Sponsors:

Rep. Grenier

Rep. Irwin

Sen. Watters

Who supports the bill: Senator Watters, Rep. Grenier, Rep. Ladd, Joshua Gagnon (Upward Bound), Ed McKay (NH Higher Ed. Commission), Tyler Bergmeier (NH Student Financial Aid Administrators), Debora McCann (Educational Talent Search), Melissa Goyait (NH Educational Oppor. Assn), Scott Power (NHCUC and NH Scholars), Shannon Reid (CCSNH), Pat Waldvogal (USNH), Rep. Irwin

Who opposes the bill: Will Anderson

Who is neutral on the bill: No one

Summary of testimony presented in support:

Rep. Grenier

Prime Sponsor

- This bill establishes a New Hampshire student access grant program.
- A similar program was repealed in 2011 in HB 2.
- If adequate funds are available, each qualified student will receive a grant up to \$1,000 yearly for up to four years.
- Eligibility for the grant requires a 2.5 GPA or higher, the student must be a NH Scholar, and the student must be in attendance for the full duration of the grant.
- By targeting grant funds to our economically challenged students, the state can prioritize funds where they are most needed.
- The state is losing too many young men and women who are moving out of state.
- There will be an opportunity for the Governor to use un-appropriated funds. This program will allow for proportional payment as well, if there are more qualified students than funds available.

- There has been a request by the Community College System for a few small changes for clarifications surrounding the idea of training.
- Senator Kahn asked what the name of the program was in 2011. Rep. Grenier stated that it was called New Hampshire Student Access Grant Program.

Joshua Gagnon

Upward Bound

- Mr. Gagnon spoke specifically to the lack of funding and the impact that this has on low income students.
- Mr. Gagnon submitted written testimony with information and statistics surrounding the bill.
- NH has the highest average tuition in the country.
- For low income students, their families are not able to pitch-in the extra thousands of dollars that these gaps require and they often lack the financial background to cosign for additional loans.
- In NH, 48 percent of recent high school graduates migrate out of state to attend two-year and four-year colleges and postsecondary career schools.
- Almost 60 percent of NH's four-year college-going high school graduates leave the state, making NH the highest exporter of four-year college students in the nation.

Ed MacKay

Division of Higher Education and Higher Education Commission

- Dr. MacKay spoke on the administrative process, should this bill be passed and implemented.
- Dr. MacKay submitted written testimony in support of the legislation.
- This legislation will encourage and enable students to not only enroll in a more rigorous curriculum while in high school, but earn college credits while in high school, matriculate at one of the NH public institutions, and earn a postsecondary education degree with less cost and debt.
- Senator Watters asked if there was any funding for this program now. Dr. MacKay stated that there is \$1 funding for this.
- Senator Kahn asked if this bill is looking for an appropriation. Dr. MacKay stated that if this is going to be a sustainable program, there will need to be funds from the general fund on a continued basis.
- Likely 4-5,000 students would be eligible in the first part of the biennium.

Tyler Bergmeier

New Hampshire Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators

- Mr. Bergmeier spoke of his own experience as a first-generation college student. He is here as an example of the impact that grants like this can have on a student.
- The average student loan debt in 2015 for NH students was over \$36,000.
- The establishment of a NH state grant would be a starting point to reduce the overall

student debt load here in the state.

- Mr. Bergmeier stressed the importance of this legislation and of passing a state grant in the state.
- Senator Kahn asked if Mr. Bergmeier could make an estimate on the number of students who would be eligible. Mr. Bergmeier stated that this is difficult to do when looking at just full-time students. Mr. Bergmeier stated that maybe 15-20,000 students would qualify for this grant.

Debora McCann

Educational Talent Search

- Student financial aid packages are getting worse and are becoming much more of a challenge for families.
- It is becoming more of a challenge for students from the neediest families to be able to go to college.
- Student financial aid packages do not cover the items students need to go to college, like books, etc.
- Ms. McCann submitted written testimony.

Melissa Goyait

New Hampshire Educational Opportunity Association

- Ms. Goyait referred to testimony submitted by Mr. Gagnon.
- Accepting more high income students of low-achieving out of state students does not give enough opportunity to New Hampshire's own students.
- By supporting this bill, the legislature would be helping the state in providing more skilled workers and reducing the cycle of poverty in the state.

Shannon Reid

Community College System of New Hampshire

- Ms. Reid stated that if the committee chooses to move forward with this bill, they should consider on lines 9 and 14 of the bill, adding "or certificate programs."
- Certificate programs are a significant part of how the community college program works.

Summary of testimony presented in opposition : N/A

Neutral Information Presented: N/A

Future Action: Pending

KAB

Date Hearing Report completed: April 4, 2017