

SB 756 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Education

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Meeting Dates: 3/8

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs Higher Education Coordinating Commission to study and develop recommendations for serving adults in custody who are eligible to receive federal student loans. Requires commission to convene certain stakeholders as part of study and to submit findings in report to legislative committees for higher education by December 31, 2021. Sunsets June 30, 3033. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

REVENUE: May have revenue impact, but no statement yet issued

FISCAL: May have fiscal impact, but no statement yet issued

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The Pell Grant financial aid program was created as part of the Higher Education Act of 1965. This program offers grants to help low-income individuals meet the cost of pursuing higher education. In 1994, Congress prohibited incarcerated individuals from accessing Pell Grants as part of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act. In 2016, the U.S. Department of Education developed a pilot program that offered Pell Grants to individuals at state or federal prisons in partnership with a limited number of higher education institutions, an initiative that became known as Second Chance Pell Grants. The original program was limited to 63 institutions, but was expanded to 130 schools in 2020. In December of 2020, Congress lifted the ban on access to Pell Grants for incarcerated individuals as part of an omnibus spending package.

Senate Bill 756 directs the Higher Education Coordinating Commission to convene a group of stakeholders to study and develop recommendations for serving adults in custody who are newly eligible to receive federal student aid, and requires the commission to report its findings to legislative committees by December 31, 2021.