



**House
Legislative
Analysis
Section**

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ELIGIBILITY FOR MI WORK-STUDY PROGRAM

House Bill 4857 with committee amendment
First Analysis (11-1-89)

RECEIVED

Sponsor: Rep. Mary C. Brown
Committee: Colleges & Universities

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Mich. State Law Lib

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

Public Act 288 of 1986 created the Michigan work-study (MWS) program, patterned after a federal work-study program and administered by the Michigan Higher Education Assistance Authority (MHEAA), which provides funds to degree-granting postsecondary schools for use in creating work-study opportunities for students. A work-study allows a student to supplement other financial aid by working on or near campus during the school year, without having to incur additional debt from student loans. Both for-profit and non-profit employers can qualify under the program as long as certain criteria are met. In the case of non-profit employers, work done on or at a facility used for church-related purposes or for activities promoting particular political or moral positions does not qualify under the program. While most see the exclusion of work done for church-related purposes as legitimate, since the state should not be subsidizing sectarian activities, some feel work done at places that promote specific political or moral positions should not be excluded. For instance, students pursuing a career in politics who wished to work on a state or local election campaign or ballot issue do not qualify for work-study even though the work is considered educational and directly related to the student's long-term goals.

Also, the act does not allow a student who works under the program to continue working (and earning money for school) during various school breaks, such as over the summer or during the holiday season. This apparently is inconsistent with the college work-study program (CWS) is the federal counterpart to MWS), which allows students who intend to return to school after a break to continue working at their CWS job during the break. Some feel making the state program consistent with the federal program would prevent confusion among students applying for either or both programs, and would give students more opportunity to earn money under the program when school was not actually in session.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

The bill would amend Public Act 288 of 1986 to delete the provision which, for purposes of qualifying under the Michigan work-study program, prohibits work done on or at buildings used to promote political or moral positions. Under the bill, this type of work would qualify for work-study.

The bill also specifies that a student could participate in the MWS program during a period when he or she was not enrolled at an eligible postsecondary school if all of the following were true:

- The student was otherwise eligible under the program;
- The student had been enrolled in at least a half-time undergraduate program of study at an eligible institution for the preceding quarter, term, or semester; and
- The postsecondary school's financial aid officer determined that the period during which the student was

not enrolled would not exceed 4 months and the student had enrolled or signed an intent to enroll in at least a half-time undergraduate program of study at the school for the next succeeding quarter, term, or semester.

MCL 390.1375

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

According to the House Fiscal Agency, the bill would not affect state expenditures. (10-31-89)

ARGUMENTS:

For:

The bill would allow work done on or at buildings where certain political or moral ideas were promoted to qualify as work a student could perform under the Michigan work study program. Currently, students interested in a career in public service or politics who wish to qualify under the program doing work related to their fields of study, for instance working in or around a state or local election campaign or ballot issue, would not qualify under the MWS program. Such work would be directly related to the student's career goals and could be educationally worthwhile. Because the program's intent is that a student receive a work-study closely related to his or her career goal, students interested in a political career should not be refused simply because they chose the "wrong" career.

Against:

Using state funds to subsidize students who wish to perform work related to a political campaign, for instance, through the MWS program would be inappropriate. Students with political interests could perform the same duties and learn just as much under a student internship without getting paid for it. Opening the MWS program to students with political interests, even if a work-study was done solely for educational purposes, could jeopardize the reputation of the whole program.

Response: Why should students who choose a career in politics or public service be denied an equal opportunity under the MWS program? To do so is unfair and discourages students from becoming involved in a career which is not just legitimate but highly honorable as well.

For:

The bill would permit MWS students, like their CWS counterparts, to continue working and earning financial aid over a school break (i.e. during summer or the holidays) under the MWS program. Adding this language to the act would coordinate the state program with the federal program to the benefit of students and the MHEAA, the administrator of both programs.

POSITIONS:

Although the Michigan Higher Education Assistance Authority has no formal position on the bill at this time, the staff of the authority will recommend that the authority

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adopt a position of support at its November 30 meeting.
(10-31-89)

The American Association of University Professors supports
the bill. (10-31-89)

The Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
of Michigan supports the bill. (10-31-89)

The President's Council on State Colleges and Universities
supports the bill but feels MWS funds generally should only
be available to eligible students who are currently enrolled
in school. (10-31-89)