

Free college tuition studied by House; K-12 funding gets Senate study

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SEATTLE – The House Higher Education Committee heard testimony Wednesday on a proposal that would make community and technical college tuition free for anyone who doesn't already have a bachelor's degree.

The proposal, House Bill 2820, would also help some students pay for books and other expenses, depending on their family income.

Legislative staff has estimated the cost to offer free college tuition would be between \$94 million and \$105 million in 2017, depending on how many students enroll.

Meanwhile in the Senate, a proposal about finishing the work required by the Washington Supreme Court in its so-called McCleary decision was almost universally panned during public testimony before the Ways and Means Committee.

Ben Rarick from the State Board of Education asked whether it would make any difference if they passed the current bill or didn't vote on any plan for figuring out how to stop the state's overreliance on local school levies to pay for basic education.