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S.B. 661 & 662: FLOOR ANALYSIS

Senate Bills 661 and 662 (as reported without amendment)

Sponsor: Senator Jason E. Allen

Committee: Education

CONTENT

<u>Senate Bill 661</u> would amend Public Act 105 of 1978, which provides for tuition differential grants to college and university students, to permit a student to receive a grant if he or she were enrolled in a program of study leading to a degree in theology or divinity. Under the Act, tuition differential grants are available to students enrolled in independent, nonprofit colleges or universities located in the State, provided that the school is incorporated; complies with the Civil Rights Act; and is approved by the State Board of Education; and the instructional programs do not consist solely of secretarian study or religious worship. Students attending these schools who are enrolled in a program of study leading to a degree in theology or divinity are specifically prohibited from receiving a tuition differential grant.

<u>Senate Bill 662</u> would amend Public Act 75 of 1974, which provides for reimbursement to approved independent, nonprofit colleges and universities for a certain amount for each degree they confer on their students (including an "allied health degree"), to allow for reimbursement for a degree conferred in theology, divinity, or religious education. Currently, to be eligible to receive payment, a school must meet criteria similar to those required for a tuition differential grant; and any degree conferred in theology, divinity, or religious education does not qualify for reimbursement.

MCL 390.1274 (S.B. 661) 390.1023 (S.B. 622) Legislative Analyst: Claire Layman

FISCAL IMPACT

The bills would have no fiscal impact on State or local government.

The State appropriations for these programs are included in the annual Higher Education appropriation act. The Tuition Differential Program and the General Degree and Allied Health Degree Reimbursement Programs have not been funded in the State budget since fiscal years (FYs) 1984-85 and 2002-03, respectively. For FY 2003-04, a total of \$4.5 million is appropriated for the Dental Degree Reimbursement Program, in which the dollars are a grant to the University of Detroit-Mercy for its southeastern Michigan dental clinics.

Date Completed: 12-16-03 Fiscal Analyst: Ellen Jeffries