



# UAW Local 4121

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## Oppose SB 5893 (Surcharge on International Students)

The Senate Budget assumes the passage of SB 5893, which imposes a **20% surcharge** on tuition/fees for international students from any of the state universities, regional universities, Evergreen, and the Community and Technical Colleges, and deposits the revenue into the general fund. We oppose this bill for several reasons:

### Runs Contrary to Higher Ed Missions and State Economic Interests

University admissions are competitive and merit-based, and designed to bring in the best and brightest from around the world. This policy would undoubtedly **reduce the number of talented international students who come to Washington** and would send the message that meritorious non-citizens are unwelcome in our state's higher education system unless they are independently wealthy. Moreover, since international students comprise a significant part of the current and future **workforce pipeline that drives our local economy**, a policy like this would only **weaken our ability to remain globally competitive**.

### Diverts Funds Away from Revenue-Generating Research

Academic Student Employees (ASEs) are a critical part of the overall **teaching and research** missions of the University of Washington, and approximately 1/3 of them are international students. The work of ASEs helps **increase instructional capacity** for our institutions, and bring to the state nearly **\$1.5 billion in revenue** from federal grants and contracts. Since the grants and contracts would pay the tuition surcharge for graduate Academic Student Employees, funds would need to be **siphoned away from cutting-edge research that creates jobs and improves our quality of life**. This would also incentivize hiring based on financial considerations rather than merit, which diminishes research quality.

### Taxes A Subset of Students Who Already Pay Significant Costs

U.S. citizens have access to different mechanisms for making higher education more affordable, whether through establishing residency in Washington to pay lower tuition rates or applying for state or federal need-based financial aid. **International students do not have access to these forms of support and already pay significantly higher tuition/fees than residents** (twice as much as for graduate students, and nearly 2.5 times as much as resident undergrads) **in addition to taxes**. The surcharge would thus impose an additional financial burden on these students, and since the revenue would be deposited in the state's general fund would not even necessarily support the institution in which they are enrolled.

The Senate Budget derives a significant portion of its new higher education funding from this surcharge and would make our higher education system weaker. We urge the adoption of a budget that relies on progressive revenue sources to keep our higher education system strong and sustainable without diminishing the quality and competitiveness of our institutions.