



Pledging to Do “Good”: An Early Commitment Pledge Program, College Scholarships, and High School Outcomes in Washington State

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Acknowledgments: The research reported here was supported by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education through Grant R305A140380. We also thank the Education Data and Research Center, the Washington Student Achievement Council, and the Washington State Department of Corrections for providing the data necessary to carry out this work. Nick Huntington-Klein, Bingjie Chen, and Kris Holden provided excellent research assistance, and James Cowan, Dani Fumia, and Karin Martin provided a number of helpful comments. The findings and opinions expressed in this paper do not necessarily reflect those of the authors' institutions, funding organization, or the data providers. All errors are our own.

Suggested citation:

Goldhaber, D., Long, M., Gratz, T., & Rooklyn, J. (2019). Pledging to Do "Good": An Early Commitment Pledge Program, College Scholarships, and High School Outcomes in Washington State. CEDR Work Paper No. 07282019-1-1. University of Washington, Seattle, WA.

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Abstract: Indiana, Oklahoma, and Washington each have programs designed to address college enrollment gaps by offering a promise of state-based college financial aid to low-income middle school students in exchange for making a pledge to do well in high school, be a good citizen, not be convicted of a felony, and apply for financial aid to college. Using a triple-difference specification, we estimate the effects of Washington's College Bound Scholarship program on students' high school grades, high school graduation, juvenile detention and rehabilitation, and incarceration in state prison during high school or early adulthood. We find insignificant and substantively small or negative effects on these outcomes. These results call into question the rationale for such early commitment programs.