

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5402

As Reported By House Committee On:
Higher Education

Title: An act relating to literacy in mathematics, science, and technology.

Brief Description: Authorizing a study of the feasibility of expanding literacy in mathematics, science, and technology.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Senators Jesernig, Sellar, Bauer and Hochstatter).

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Higher Education, March 30, 1993, DPA.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Jacobsen, Chair; Quall, Vice Chair; Brumsickle, Ranking Minority Member; Sheahan, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bray; Carlson; Kessler; J. Kohl; Mielke; Ogden; Rayburn; Shin; and Wood.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Casada.

Staff: Marilee Scarbrough (786-7196).

Background: According to recent reports, the quality of mathematics and science education has declined in the United States over the past 10 years. Educators and scientists have written of a growing problem of illiteracy in, and aversion to, the subjects of science and mathematics.

Economists suggest that attraction of new high technology related industries would help to diversify the Washington State economy. These educational and economic factors lead many to the conclusion that improving literacy and education in the areas of mathematics, science and technology will become increasingly important to the future of the state.

Summary of Amended Bill: The Higher Education Coordinating Board may solicit, receive and expend private gifts and grants to conduct a study on the feasibility of creating a

Washington State institute for science, technology, and society. If sufficient funds are available by July 1, 1994, the board may contract with an appropriate person or entity to conduct the study. The study must be completed by July 1, 1995. The Higher Education Coordinating Board must report the findings, conclusions and recommendations to the Legislature by January 1, 1996.

The study will: (1) identify the appropriate role and mission of an institute; (2) examine options for a governmental structure and location; and (3) determine options for funding.

The purposes of a Washington State institute for science, technology and society are identified. The institute will: (1) implement a long-range mathematics, science and technology literacy program; (2) develop and disseminate textbooks and course materials; (3) provide training through workshops and institutes; (4) coordinate the dissemination of information to groups and agencies; and (5) provide technical expertise to common schools and institutions of higher education.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: The amendment allows the Higher Education Coordinating Board to solicit, receive and expend private gifts and grants. The study will only be conducted if sufficient public or private funds are available. The components and purpose of the study are clarified.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This bill allows the Higher Education Coordinating Board to conduct a study on the feasibility of creating an institute for science, technology and society. We need a statewide approach for assuring math, science and technology literacy.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: (In favor) Representative Val Ogden.