
Higher Education Committee

HB 1607

Brief Description: Including members of the Samish Indian Nation for purposes of resident tuition.

Sponsors: Representatives Strow, Kenney, Walsh, McCoy, Ormsby, Murray, Chase, Dickerson, Hasegawa, Roberts, Santos and Hudgins.

Brief Summary of Bill
<ul style="list-style-type: none">For purposes of qualifying for resident tuition rates, includes members of the Samish Indian Nation with members of other Native American tribes whose traditional tribal boundaries are in Washington.

Hearing Date: 2/11/05

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

State laws define a number of criteria for determining residency for purposes of paying resident tuition rates at public institutions of higher education. The primary criterion is that the student, or his or her family if the student is a dependent, must have a bona fide domicile in Washington for at least one year prior to the academic year in which the student wishes to enroll.

Native American students can qualify for resident tuition if they were a resident of Idaho, Montana, Oregon, or Washington during the prior year, and if they are a member of an American Indian tribe whose traditional and customary tribal boundaries included portions of Washington, or whose tribe was granted reserved lands in the state. Thirty-three different tribes are specified in the statute. Twenty-seven are Washington State tribes recognized by the federal government. Five are tribes whose primary tribal boundaries are in neighboring states.

If a Native American student would not otherwise qualify as a resident, but does qualify under this law, the institution cannot count that student as a "state-supported" student for purposes of budgeted enrollment, and no state funds are provided to support that student's education. This law was enacted in 1994.

The Samish Indian Nation has its historic roots in the San Juan Islands of Northwest Washington and has approximately 1,000 members. Between 1969 and 1996, the Samish were not considered a federally-recognized Indian tribe. The tribe regained federal recognition by the U.S. Bureau of

Indian Affairs on April 9, 1996. The Samish Indian Nation is not currently included in the statutory list of tribes under the law regarding resident tuition for Native American students.

Summary of Bill:

The Samish Indian Nation is added to a list of American Indian tribes whose customary and tribal boundaries include portions of Washington, for purposes of making members of the tribe eligible for resident tuition under certain circumstances.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.