
Higher Education Committee

SSB 5172

Brief Description: Establishing a University of Washington center for human rights.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Development (originally sponsored by Senators Shin, Hobbs, Kastama, McAuliffe, Jarrett, Pridemore, Brown, Keiser, Jacobsen, Kohl-Welles and Kline).

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Substitute Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establishes the University of Washington Center for Human Rights.
--

Hearing Date: 3/18/09

Staff: Andi Smith (786-7304)

Background:

The University of Washington (UW) currently offers a minor in Human Rights at all three of its campuses. The Human Rights minor is typically interdisciplinary in nature, as it involves study in a variety of disciplines from sociology, political science, and economics to women's studies, philosophy and psychology.

The UW houses the Comparative Law and Society Studies Center (CLASS), which promotes interdisciplinary research and teaching as well as community service regarding law, justice, and human rights throughout the world. The Human Rights Education and Research Network (HRERN) operated on all three campuses of the UW from 1998-2007 and focused on promoting human rights scholarship, training graduate students for human rights education, and cultivating ties between the University of Washington and other local, national, and international human rights organizations.

Many other public and private universities in the United States and abroad have centers for human rights, including Duke University, the University of Iowa, Princeton, Harvard, the University of Texas at Austin, and the University of California, Berkeley. Each center has a

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

different focus but generally the centers provide an interdisciplinary location for research, policy analysis, and dialogue on human rights. Some of the centers have internship, community service, or advocacy components. Most of the centers are located in a law school or a public policy school, but a few are located in other areas, such as international programs. Most rely on private donations, at least in part, to carry out the mission of the centers.

Summary of Bill:

The UW Center for Human Rights is created. The mission of the center is to expand opportunities for Washington residents to receive education in human rights, generate research data and expert knowledge to enhance public and private policymaking, and become an academic center for human rights teaching and research in the nation.

Key substantive issues for the center include: the rights of all persons to security against violence; the rights of immigrants, Native Americans, and ethnic or religious minorities; human rights and the environment; health as a human right; human rights and trade; the human rights of working people; and women's rights as human rights.

The Higher Education Coordinating Board may solicit, accept, receive, and administer federal or private funds to support the UW Center for Human Rights.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on March 16, 2009.

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