

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2288

As Reported By House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to violence prevention for safe schools.

Brief Description: Providing grants for school districts to develop a safe schools strategy.

Sponsors: Representatives Cothern, Brumsickle, Roland, J. Kohl, Jones, Eide, King, Carlson, L. Johnson and Anderson; by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Education, February 4, 1994, DPS.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 18 members: Representatives Dorn, Chair; Cothern, Vice Chair; Brough, Ranking Minority Member; B. Thomas, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Brumsickle; Carlson; G. Cole; Eide; G. Fisher; Hansen; Holm; Jones; Karahalios; J. Kohl; Patterson; Pruitt; Roland and L. Thomas.

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

Staff: Robert Butts (786-7111).

Background: According to the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, the types of offenses for which juveniles are being arrested are increasingly violent. For example, 1,340 juveniles were arrested for murder, manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery and aggravated assault in 1983. More than double that number of juveniles - 2,878 - were arrested for the same offenses in 1991.

Similarly, in 1983, 1,543 juveniles were arrested for assaults other than aggravated assaults; by 1991 that number had more than tripled, to 4,861.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Safe Schools/Safe Communities Grant Program

The Department of Community Development is to administer a Safe Schools/Safe Communities grant program that provides resources for community and school-based violence prevention initiatives. The grants may be used for Safe School Teams, employment assistance, parent involvement, referral services, and a number of other activities. Grants shall be awarded for three years, with a second series of grants awarded in 1996.

Educator Training and Assistance

The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) shall prepare, or contract to prepare, a guide of available programs and strategies pertaining to conflict resolution and other violence prevention topics.

SPI shall contract with school districts, educational service districts, and approved in-service providers to conduct training sessions in conflict resolution and other violence prevention topics for school certificated and classified employees.

The state Board of Education (SBE) shall require teacher preparation programs to provide instruction in, or have educational outcomes pertaining to, the teaching of conflict resolution and other violence prevention skills.

Career Ladders for At-risk Youth

SPI shall provide funding to an educational service district to implement a program for young people who are considered to be seriously at-risk of school or social failure, such as first-time juvenile offenders. The program, which must be conducted in collaboration with school districts, shall include work-based learning opportunities that are paid, highly-structured, and supervised, job search services, counseling, post secondary education guidance, social skills training, and transition planning.

School Discipline and Safety

School district boards of directors may establish schools and programs with stringent dress and discipline codes and required parental participation. School boards may require students who would otherwise be suspended or expelled to attend these schools.

Changes are made in the transfer of student records when students transfer to a new school.

School conduct shall be made a part of juvenile court diversion agreements.

SPI and the Attorney General, in cooperation with the Washington Bar Association, are to develop a volunteer-based conflict resolution and mediation program.

Drug, Alcohol, and Violence Prevention and Intervention Program

The existing Drug and Alcohol Prevention and Intervention grant program, which was created in 1989, is expanded to include violence prevention.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Administration of the grant program was transferred to the Department of Community Development from SPI, and the type of activities that may be funded by the program was expanded. Additional violence prevention programs and measures were added.

Fiscal Note: Available. Requested on substitute February 4, 1994.

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

Testimony For: Violence in our schools is a major issue that must be addressed: it is the number one issue for parents and teachers. We need a comprehensive approach that begins in the early grades. Conflict resolution training, increased discipline, and other violence prevention strategies have been proven to work. Building on the foundation developed by the Drug and Alcohol grant program makes sense.

Testimony Against: Non-directive, effective decision-making programs, such as DARE, do not work. Being able to read is the key. A very large percentage of inmates in jail are illiterate. The real problem is widespread permissiveness and the failure of parents to teach traditional values such as honesty, right and wrong, and discipline.

Witnesses: Judith Billings, Superintendent of Public Instruction (pro); Jackie LaChappel, Olympic Educational Service District 114 (pro); Felice Olson and Kristen Beller, students (pro); Marian Hinds, parent (concerns); Karen Bachelder, Committee for Children (pro); Mike Giambattista, Conflict Resolution Unlimited (pro); Marcia Costello, Washington Association of School Administrators (pro); Lee Landrud, Coalition for Learning in '90's" (pro); Bob Fisher, Washington Education Association (pro); Marcia Holland, Washington State Parent Teacher Association (pro); Pari Johnson, parent (con); Pricilla Martens, The Capitol Project (con); John Kvamme and Don Herbert, Tacoma Public Schools (pro); Rick Hayward, Seattle Public Schools (pro); Sioux Feldman, Olympia Public Schools (pro); and Evan Ferber,

Dispute Resolution Center of Thurston County.