

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5276

As of February 3, 2009

Title: An act relating to the authority to offer engineering programs at regional comprehensive universities.

Brief Description: Eliminating the exclusive authority of the University of Washington and Washington State University to offer certain engineering courses.

Sponsors: Senators Schoesler, Jarrett, Oemig, Shin and Holmquist.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education & Workforce Development: 2/03/09.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

Background: "Major line" at universities means the development of the work or courses of study in certain subjects leading to an undergraduate or graduate degree or degrees in that subject. Major lines offered at both Washington State University (WSU) and the University of Washington (UW) include pharmacy, architecture, civil engineering, mechanical engineering, chemical engineering, and forest management. Additional major lines at WSU include agriculture, veterinary medicine, and economic science related to agriculture and rural life. Additional major lines at UW include law, medicine, library sciences, aeronautic and astronautic engineering, fisheries, forest products and logging engineering. No other public institution of higher education may offer these major lines.

Summary of Bill: Civil engineering, mechanical engineering, and chemical engineering are no longer exclusive major lines at WSU and UW. Aeronautic and astronautic engineering are no longer exclusive major lines at UW. Undergraduate or graduate degrees in these lines of study may be offered at any institution of higher education in Washington.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: There is a very high demand for engineers and a limited supply in Washington that is controlled by statute. Engineering technology degrees are available at Eastern Washington University (EWU) now. This can be done within available funds and with available facilities. EWU will not be competing with UW or WSU because these degrees will focus on practical application to a greater extent.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Schoesler, prime sponsor; John Mason, Judd Case, Michael Brzoska, EWU.