

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1143

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to higher education.

Brief Description: Authorizing honorary degrees.

Sponsor(s): Representatives Wood, Jacobsen, Schmidt, May, Miller, Paris, Jones, Beck, Spanel, Fuhrman, Haugen, Heavey, Winsley, Forner, Mitchell, Betrozoff and Wynne.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Higher Education, January 31, 1991, DP.
Passed House February 14, 1991, 95-1;
Passed Legislature, 95-1.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
HIGHER EDUCATION**

Majority Report: *Do pass.* Signed by 13 members:
Representatives Jacobsen, Chair; Ogden, Vice Chair; Wood,
Ranking Minority Member; May, Assistant Ranking Minority
Member; Basich; Dellwo; Fraser; Ludwig; Miller; Prince;
Sheldon; Spanel; and Van Luven.

Staff: Susan Hosch (786-7120).

Background: The University of Washington and Washington State University are permitted, by law, to grant honorary degrees. Upon recommendation of the faculty, the honorary degrees may be given to persons who did not graduate from the universities. The honorary degrees are conferred in recognition of a person's learning or devotion to literature, art or science. Honorary degrees cannot be granted for money or for donation of any kind of property.

The regional universities and colleges, and the community colleges are not authorized, by law, to grant honorary degrees.

Summary of Bill: Upon recommendation of the faculty, the governing boards of the regional institutions of higher education, and the governing boards of the community colleges may grant honorary degrees. The honorary degrees may be granted to people who did not graduate from the institution. The honorary degrees may be conferred in

recognition of learning or devotion to education, literature, art, or science. No degree may be given for money or for the donation of any kind of property.

The community colleges are authorized to grant an honorary associate of arts degree. The regional institutions may confer an honorary bachelor's or master's degree.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: A few members of local communities provide countless hours of service to local community colleges. A special and appropriate way to honor them would be to grant them an honorary associate of arts degree. This method of recognition would be a way of showing a college's appreciation of the benefit they have provided to the college and the community it serves.

Some of the regional universities and college would also like to use honorary degrees to recognize outstanding service.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Jerry Brong, Central Washington University (in favor); and Ron Crossland, State Board for Community College Education (in favor).