

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1664

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, FEBRUARY 25, 1992

Brief Description: Clarifying educational requirements regarding sign language.

SPONSORS: Representatives Belcher, Brumsickle, Ferguson, Fraser, Scott, G. Fisher, Cole, R. Johnson, Mielke, Bowman, Winsley and Anderson.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Bailey, Chairman; Erwin, Vice Chairman; Craswell, Metcalf, Murray, Oke, and Talmadge.

Staff: Leslie Goldstein (786-7424)

Hearing Dates: March 26, 1991; April 3, 1991; February 25, 1992

BACKGROUND:

In 1988, the Legislature passed several laws concerning sign language. Under RCW 28A.230.090 (regarding high school graduation requirements), sign language classes are allowed to satisfy foreign language requirements. Under RCW 28B.80.350 (regarding minimum admission standards for four-year institutions), coursework in sign language satisfies any foreign language requirement established as a general undergraduate admissions requirement. Under RCW 28A.410.010 (regarding certification of school employees), the State Board of Education is required to take certain steps regarding certification of sign language instructors. A specific sign language is not designated in statute. School districts currently teach different types of sign languages.

SUMMARY:

The only sign language that meets a foreign language requirement for high school graduation or college admissions is American Sign Language.

The State Board of Education is directed to adopt rules pertaining to the qualifications of instructors in American Sign Language.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: none requested

TESTIMONY FOR:

American Sign Language is the language of deaf people. It is a foreign language with its own rules for grammar, syntax, and lexicons.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: PRO: Ken Breslow, school psychologist; Benny Doctor, Office of Deaf Services