

**SENATE BILL REPORT**

**SB 5505**

**AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, FEBRUARY 28, 1991**

**Brief Description:** Affecting programs in Pacific Rim education.

**SPONSORS:** Senators Talmadge, Pelz and Bauer.

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

**Majority Report:** Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Bailey, Chairman; Erwin, Vice Chairman; Murray, Pelz, Rinehart, A. Smith, and Talmadge.

**Staff:** Susan Mosborg (786-7439)

**Hearing Dates:** February 27, 1991; February 28, 1991

**BACKGROUND:**

Last year, the Legislature established the Pacific Rim Language Scholarship Program to encourage the study of Pacific Rim languages in high schools. The program provides 32 \$1,000 scholarships each year: one in each of four languages (Spanish, Russian, Japanese, and Chinese) in every congressional district. Recipients must be high school students who have become proficient speakers of the language during their high school career and plan to enter a college or university in Washington within one year.

International education legislation enacted in 1987 provided for the development of K-12 curriculum guidelines for international education, which are now available for use by school districts. A grant program to help school districts implement their international education programs was also established but has not been funded. In addition, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) has sponsored a teacher exchange program with China every year since 1985-86. Each year the program has allowed three to five Chinese teachers to teach in Washington and three Washington teachers to teach in China.

Under current state law, teachers who are not U.S. citizens may qualify for a limited certificate to teach a foreign language or participate in a formal teacher exchange program in Washington schools. However, many are not eligible for regular teacher certification due to a conflict created by the interaction of state and federal law. To be eligible for regular teacher certification under state law, a person must either be a U.S. citizen or have filed a declaration of intent to become a U.S. citizen. Under federal law, persons can file such a declaration only if they have residency status (a

"green card"), which nonrefugees may get only if a U.S. citizen-relative petitions on their behalf, or if they have a job arranged for which no qualified U.S. citizen is available. The federal government will not consider a noncitizen teacher for a job-available green card if the teacher is not certified by the state, while the state will not certify a teacher who has not declared citizenship intent, which requires a green card.

**SUMMARY:**

Pacific Rim Language Scholarship Program

The Pacific Rim Language Scholarship Program is expanded to include four additional scholarships per year in each congressional district: one in Korean, one in Thai, one in Vietnamese, and one in Khmer.

Scholarship eligibility criteria are expanded to include native speakers. To be eligible, students must: (1) have taken a course in the language, or the culture or history related to the language, during their high school careers, or (2) be native speakers of the language. Selection criteria include: (1) degree of oral proficiency in the Pacific Rim language; (2) improvement in ability to speak the language during his or her high school career; and (3) demonstrated potential to teach or otherwise use the language to enrich the state's cultural understanding and economic health.

Scholarships are renewable for up to four years. Available funds must be spent first for new scholarships. Unused scholarships may be awarded to qualified applicants in another congressional district or Pacific Rim language.

The program's sunset date of June 30, 1996 is repealed.

International Education

Funds are provided for the international education grant program established in 1987. Five grants shall be awarded to school districts, or groups of school districts. New additional application criteria include use of the international education curriculum guidelines developed by OSPI and intent to conduct a foreign language program in at least two Pacific Rim languages (from Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Thai and Vietnamese) beginning in the ninth grade.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction is authorized to coordinate and sponsor teacher exchanges between Washington schools and schools in Pacific Rim languages. Funds are provided for approximately 12 exchanges per year. The superintendent may also solicit and accept grants and donations from public and private sources for the teacher exchange program.

Citizenship Requirement for Teacher Certification

The U.S. citizenship requirement for regular teacher certification is repealed.

**Appropriation:** \$777,000: \$252,000 from the general fund to the higher education coordinating board for the Pacific Rim Language Scholarship program; \$25,000 from the general fund to OSPI for the international education grant program; and \$500,000 from the general fund to OSPI for the Pacific Rim teacher exchange program.

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** available

**TESTIMONY FOR:**

It is hoped the bill will create a pool of teachers who are speakers of Pacific Rim Languages.

The bill gives recognition and validity to bilingual multiculturalism, at a time when Americans overseas are noted for their monolingualism. It also sends a powerful, needed message to native speakers that their language skills are valued.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST:** None

**TESTIFIED:** Patricia Lee, Commission on Asian-American Affairs  
(pro)