

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1173

As Reported By House Committee On:
Higher Education

Title: An act relating to American Indians.

Brief Description: Establishing a center for the development of curriculum of American Indians of the Northwest.

Sponsors: Representatives Jacobsen, Dellwo, Brumsickle, G. Cole, J. Kohl, R. Fisher, Ogden, Linville, Dunshee, Pruitt, Van Luven, Johanson, Sheldon, Wood, Leonard and Kessler.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Higher Education, February 3, 1993, DP.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Signed by 17 members: Representatives Jacobsen, Chair; Quall, Vice Chair; Brumsickle, Ranking Minority Member; Sheahan, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bray; Carlson; Casada; Finkbeiner; Flemming; Kessler; J. Kohl; Mielke; Ogden; Orr; Rayburn; Shin; and Wood.

Staff: Susan Hosch (786-7120).

Background: American Indian students comprise about 2.5 percent of students enrolled in the state's K-12 system. They comprise 11 percent of the students who drop out of school in grades nine through 12. In some school districts, more than half of the American Indian students drop out before graduating from high school. For example, 56 percent of American Indian students in the Seattle school district and 75 percent in the Wellpinit school district drop out of high school.

These dramatic statistics are among the reasons that the State Board of Education and the Superintendent of Public Instruction adopted a Joint Policy Statement on Indian Education on January 24, 1991. In the statement, the agencies agreed to involve American Indians in every aspect of public education. They also agreed to develop, disseminate and use materials on Indian heritage and culture in the public schools; and to provide leadership in training educators in Indian heritage, and in the specialty of teaching Indian children.

In a report of the United States Department of Education, similar goals were recommended to the nation's colleges and universities. The department recommended that teacher training programs be revised to prepare educators to work within a multicultural setting that supports and challenges students from diverse cultures. It also recommended that institutions encourage scholarly work on curricula and textbook development that incorporates Native perspectives. In addition, the department recommended that institutions develop partnerships with school districts to improve local education and with Native communities to provide technical assistance, train professionals, and address research questions important to the communities.

Summary of Bill: A center is established for the development of curriculum on American Indians of the Northwest. The center will be administered by a state college or university selected by the Higher Education Coordinating Board. The Board's duties in selecting the institution are described. The purposes of the center are described. They include: (1) developing curriculum for students in K-12 on American Indian history, government and philosophy; (2) assisting school districts in evaluating the portrayal of American Indians in textbooks, when funding is available; (3) working with institutions of higher education to develop course work and materials for prospective teachers on the history, philosophy, psychology and government of the American Indians; (4) providing workshops and materials to teachers, professors and school administrators; and (5) working with American Indian leaders, educators and community leaders to ensure the center focuses on issues of concern to American Indians; and seeks additional funding from federal, local and private sources.

The president of the institution administering the center will appoint a committee to advise the center. Among others, the committee will include membership from educators and various constituencies within the American Indian community.

Fiscal Note: Requested February 2, 1993.

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

Testimony For: Native Americans throughout the country believe that teachers need to be trained in the culture, history, and psychology of Native American students. This kind of training will help teachers to empathize with and respect the cultural differences of their Native American students. In turn, this understanding and respect will help

to raise the self esteem and cultural pride of those students.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: (in favor) Colleen Ray and Jennifer Jaech, The Evergreen State College; Deborah Parker, Richard Broncheau, Melissa Campobusso, Westby Thomas, Philip Bange and McArthur Silverhorn, University of Washington; Michelle Anguilar, Office of Indian Affairs; Ron Lauzon, Snoqualmie Indian Tribe; Gloria Picard, and Mary Marchand, Colville Confederated Tribes; Gordon Queahpitmia, Yakima Indian Nation; and Patsy Martin, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.