

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1511

As Reported By House Committee On:
Commerce & Labor

Title: An act relating to restoring local control of educational employees' salaries.

Brief Description: Changing salary provisions for educational employees.

Sponsors: Representatives Heavey, Dorn, Miller, Karahalios, King, Carlson, Locke, Appelwick, Jones, Ogden, Thibaudeau, Rayburn, Van Luven and G. Fisher.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Commerce & Labor, February 10, 1993, DP.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members:
Representatives Heavey, Chair; G. Cole, Vice Chair; Conway; Horn; King; Springer; and Veloria.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 2 members:
Representatives Lisk, Ranking Minority Member and Chandler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member.

Staff: Chris Cordes (786-7117).

Background: Under the Educational Employment Relations Act, certificated employees of school districts may collectively bargain over wages, hours, and terms and conditions of employment. Since 1981, however, school districts have been prohibited from granting certificated school employee salary increases that exceed the increases provided in the state appropriations act.

This prohibition was modified in 1987 when the Legislature began distributing funds for certificated instructional staff salaries under a statewide salary allocation schedule established in the state appropriations act. Except for some "grandfathered" school districts, districts may not provide an average salary for certificated instructional staff that exceeds the average salary level allocated by the state. School districts may exceed these salary limitations only by supplemental contracts for additional time,

additional responsibility, or incentives. Supplemental contracts may be for one year only, and are not authorized for services that are a necessary part of the constitutionally mandated basic education program. These contracts are subject to collective bargaining and may not cause the state to incur any present or future funding obligations.

Summary of Bill: The requirement that the actual average salary for basic education certificated instructional staff not exceed the school district's average basic education certificated instructional staff salary allocation is changed. The actual average salary may exceed the salary allocation in the state appropriations act, but the state does not incur any present or future funding obligations for that portion of the salary.

The provision is repealed in the Educational Employment Relations Act that prohibits the parties from reaching agreements to grant salary increases exceeding those authorized by the state appropriations act.

Fiscal Note: Requested February 5, 1993.

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

Testimony For: The bill lifts collective bargaining restrictions over teacher salaries, but holds the state harmless for additional salary increases that are above the state's allocation. This is the same system that classified staff bargain under now. Allocating salaries equally across the state results in inequitable treatment for teachers because of the differences in cost of living from region to region. This bill gives the local districts an opportunity to control the inequities and decide the worth of the teachers in their communities. The system is flawed when teachers cannot afford to live in the communities in which they teach.

Testimony Against: The bill would create more problems for local districts than it would solve. As history has shown, if salary increases are supported by local levies and there is a levy failure, the district will not be able to maintain the salaries and will come to the Legislature for relief. It may be prudent to give educational reform efforts a chance to work before changing the system.

Witnesses: (In favor) Bob Maier and Doc Dengenis, Washington Education Association; and Bruce Colwell, Seattle Education Association. (Opposed) Dwayne Slate, Washington State School Directors' Association.