

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HCR 4429

As Reported By House Committee On:
State Government

Brief Description: Establishing a joint select committee on Indian Affairs.

Sponsors: Representatives King, Anderson, Fuhrman, Orr, Jacobsen, Rayburn, Lisk, Veloria, Schmidt, Heavey, Ballard, Wineberry, Sheldon, Leonard, Pruitt, Jones and J. Kohl.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
State Government, February 2, 1994, DP.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Anderson, Chair; Veloria, Vice Chair; Reams, Ranking Minority Member; L. Thomas, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Campbell; Conway; Dyer; King and Pruitt.

Staff: Bonnie Austin (786-7135).

Background: On August 4, 1989, Governor Gardner and the 26 federally recognized Indian tribes in Washington State entered into an agreement known as the Centennial Accord. The Centennial Accord establishes a framework for government-to-government relationships between the tribes and state agencies. Goals of the Centennial Accord include improving communication, achieving mutual goals through cooperation, and resolving issues of mutual concern through negotiations rather than through the courts.

On March 3, 1993, Governor Lowry issued a proclamation endorsing and pledging to continue the principles outlined in the Centennial Accord. To date, the Centennial Accord has not included the Washington Legislature.

Summary of Bill: A Joint Select Committee on Indian Affairs is established to study the relationship between the state and the tribes, to mutually inform each other about the workings of their respective governments, to examine ways of improving the working relationship, to examine the potential role of the Legislature in overseeing the Centennial Accord, and to make policy recommendations.

The committee will consist of 10 members of the Legislature, five from the Senate and five from the House of Representatives. The committee will report its findings to the 1996 Legislature.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Testimony For: The Indian nations are co-managers of the state's fisheries. There are also on-going relationships in the area of gaming. We need to formalize these relationships. The accord will show up in the future as budget items and legislators need to know what these items are about. The state has had a less than respectful history regarding tribal sovereignty, but progress has been made and we would like that progress to continue. This will increase the awareness of legislators of tribes within their districts. Many agencies have negotiated agreements with various tribes. Indian communities are growing after a century of decline, and legislators need to get to know them.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Representative Dick King, prime sponsor (pro); Randy Scott, Quinault Indian Nation (pro); Peg Ahvakana, Suquamish Nation (pro); and Richard A. Swan, Colville Tribe (pro).