

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1398

As Reported By House Committee On:
Higher Education

Title: An act relating to literacy in mathematics, science, and technology.

Brief Description: Authorizing a study of the feasibility of expanding literacy in mathematics, science, and technology.

Sponsors: Representatives Ogden, Jacobsen, Hansen, Springer, Chandler, Edmondson, Grant, Ludwig, Rayburn, Basich, Wineberry, Shin, Brough, Finkbeiner and J. Kohl.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Higher Education, March 3, 1993, DPS.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 17 members: Representatives Jacobsen, Chair; Quall, Vice Chair; Brumsickle, Ranking Minority Member; Sheahan, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Basich; Bray; Carlson; Finkbeiner; Flemming; Kessler; J. Kohl; Mielke; Ogden; Orr; Rayburn; Shin; and Wood.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Casada.

Staff: Marilee Scarbrough (786-7196).

Background: According to recent reports, the quality of mathematics and science education has declined in the United States over the past 10 years.

Educators and scientists have written of a growing problem of illiteracy in, and aversion to, the subjects of science and mathematics.

Economists suggest that attraction of new high technology related industries would help to diversify the Washington State economy. These educational and economic factors lead many to the conclusion that improving literacy and education in the areas of mathematics, science and technology will become increasingly important to the future of the state.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Higher Education Coordinating Board is directed to contract with a person or entity to conduct a study on issues related to literacy in mathematics, science and technology.

The study is to include an analysis of the benefits and disadvantages of achieving or not achieving broad social literacy, and a review of existing or anticipated efforts in this state to enhance the quality of mathematics, science and technology instruction in the common schools and higher education institutions.

The study will include an analysis of the desirability of creating a Washington State Institute for Science and Society that would promote awareness and understanding of math, science and technology; coordinate and communicate between existing efforts in the state; and provide a vital role in sustaining change in the delivery of mathematics, science and technology.

In determining the feasibility of a center, the study will assess: whether a state institute is an appropriate means of building and maintaining social awareness; the kind of mission and focus that would be appropriate for an institute; and options for funding.

The Higher Education Coordinating Board may receive and expend private gifts or grants to conduct the study. The person or entity that conducts the study will submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the Legislature and the governor by December 1, 1994.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The Washington Institute for Public Policy will not conduct the study. Instead, the Higher Education Coordinating Board will contract with a person or entity to conduct the study. Language is added that allows the Higher Education Coordinating Board to accept private gifts or grants to conduct the study.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Appropriation: An unspecified amount is appropriated for the biennium ending June 30, 1995, from the state general fund to the Higher Education Coordinating Board for the purposes of this act.

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

Testimony For: The Central Washington University Institute for Science and Society is a prototype we need to expand to

the whole state. The program benefits students and teachers. Teachers grow and they benefit from the instruction they receive. Exposure to science and technology is the key. We must make teachers unafraid so they want to share with students. Very young children enjoy science and math and they need to be encouraged. Unfortunately, girls are sometimes discouraged from participating in science and math. We need leadership in math and science for the benefit of our state and nation. There is a possibility of receiving private funds to conduct the study.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: (In favor) Mike McCormack and Joan Harris, Public Institute for Science and Technology.