

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5075

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, FEBRUARY 15, 1993

**Brief Description:** Prohibiting hazing at institutions of higher education.

**SPONSORS:** Senators Winsley, Fraser and Erwin

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION**

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5075 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Bauer, Chairman; Drew, Vice Chairman; Cantu, Jesernig, Prince, Quigley, Sheldon, and West.

**Staff:** Scott Huntley (786-7421)

**Hearing Dates:** February 10, 1993; February 15, 1993

**BACKGROUND:**

Hazing has been viewed as a serious social problem affecting institutions of higher education. This view is particularly strong at those institutions with fraternity and sorority living groups, which sometimes have prescribed initiation rituals required for acceptance into the organization.

Hazing is illegal at institutions of higher education in 28 states. Although some of this state's four-year institutions of higher education have adopted internal anti-hazing policies, the state of Washington has no statute specifically addressing the issue of hazing and prescribing penalties.

**SUMMARY:**

"Hazing" is defined as a method of initiation into a student organization or living group that causes, or is likely to cause, bodily danger or physical harm to any student or other person attending a public or private institution of higher education. Customary athletic events or other similar contests or competitions are specifically excluded from this definition.

No student or other person in attendance at any public or private institution of higher education may engage, or conspire to engage, in hazing. This prohibition includes committing an act that injures, degrades or disgraces a fellow student or other person attending the institution.

Hazing is a misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of not more than \$1,000 or imprisonment in the county jail for not more than 90 days, or both.

Any student who participates in hazing will forfeit any entitlement to public funds, scholarships or awards. Any organization or living group that knowingly permits hazing to be conducted by those subject to its control will be deprived of any sanction, official recognition, or approval granted by a public institution of higher education.

**EFFECT OF PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE:**

The definition of "hazing" is expanded to include serious mental or emotional harm. Language prohibiting further actions, not included under the specific definition of hazing, is removed.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** available

**TESTIMONY FOR:**

Initiation rites into fraternities and sororities on college campuses have resulted in individuals being placed in very dangerous situations. In some cases, serious injury and even death has occurred as a result of hazing of this kind. Twenty-eight other states have moved to control such initiations by creating the crime of hazing and prescribing penalties for the practice. This state should also do this in order to protect students, and institutions that might be liable to lawsuits if such practices occur on their campuses.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST:** None

**TESTIFIED:** Larry Ganders, Washington State University (pro); Mary Marcy, Central Washington University (pro); George Durrie, Eastern Washington University (pro)