SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5402

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

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

SPONSORS: Senators Jesernig, Sellar, Bauer and Hochstatter

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5402 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.
Signed by Senators Bauer, Chairman; Drew, Vice Chairman; Cantu, Jesernig, Prince, Quigley, Sheldon, von Reichbauer, and West.

Staff: Scott Huntley (786-7421)

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

BACKGROUND:

Over the past ten years many national studies have documented a decline in the quality of mathematics and science education in the United States. Educators and scientists have noted a general functional illiteracy in, and aversion to, the subjects of science and mathematics. In 1989, the Charlottesville Education Summit adopted the goal of making the United States first in the world in science and mathematics achievement.

There is also a growing consensus that the state of Washington needs to diversify its economy by attracting and developing new high technology related industries. These new educational and economic factors bring 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:

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy is directed to conduct a study of the issues related to literacy in mathematics, science and technology.

The study includes 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. Additionally, this review recommends to the Legislature, and various educational agencies, methods to assure that the curriculum of the common schools and the programs leading to teacher certification include instruction in mathematics, science and technology.

The study provides an analysis of the feasibility of creating a Washington State Institute for Science and Society. The study is also directed to include an analysis of the feasibility of creating a state science academy and a state office of technology assessment in conjunction with the creation of an institute for science and society.

The Institute for Public Policy will submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the Legislature and the Governor by December 1, 1994.

EFFECT OF PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE:

The name of the institute, which is one of the subjects of the study, is changed from "Institute for Science and Society" to "Institute for Science and Technology." Private or governmental donations to defray the cost of performing the study are allowed and encouraged. The appropriation is eliminated.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: available

TESTIMONY FOR:

General literacy in science, mathematics and technology is slipping. Programs such as those suggested in this legislation will help reestablish strong educational programs in science, mathematics and technology.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: Mike McCormack, Joan Harris, Institute for Science and Society, Central Washington University (pro); Mike Tracy, Puget Power (pro); Jo Herber, American Association of University Women (pro)