

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2691

As Reported By House Committee On:

Higher Education
Appropriations

Title: An act relating to the Washington center for real estate research.

Brief Description: Creating the Washington center for real estate research.

Sponsors: Representatives Carlson, O'Brien, Sheahan, Mason, Parlette and Schoesler.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 1/29/98, 1/30/98 [DPS];

Appropriations: 2/6/98, 2/7/98 [DPS(HE)].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Carlson, Chairman; Radcliff, Vice Chairman; Mason, Ranking Minority Member; Kenney, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Butler; Dunn; O'Brien; Sheahan and Van Luven.

Staff: Sherie Story (786-7120).

Background: The Washington Center for Real Estate Research was created at Washington State University (WSU) in 1989 with funding provided by a series of grants from a real estate education account administered by the Department of Licensing. The education account's resources are derived from interest earned on real estate brokers' trust accounts.

The combination of lower interest rates and the decision made by an increasing number of brokers not to maintain trust accounts reduces the available funding for the center.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Washington Center for Real Estate Research is established, to be located in the College of Business and Economics at Washington State University.

The center is financed by a fee of \$10 to be assessed on each real estate broker, associate broker, and sales person original license and renewal license, including inactive renewals.

The fee is applicable to all original licenses issued after June 30, 1998, and to all renewals of licenses with expiration dates after June 30, 1998. The center may charge for its publications, may receive gifts and grants, and may engage in contract work for both public and private clients.

The Washington Center for Real Estate Research account is created in the custody of the State Treasurer. The account is subject to allotment procedures under Chapter 43.88 RCW but an appropriation is not required for expenditure.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The center is directed to conduct studies in economically isolated communities. The center is directed to supply information that encourages and supports economic growth and development within the state, including economically isolated communities. It is clarified that the license fee also applies to the renewal of licenses that expire after June 30, 1998.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 22, 1998.

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

Testimony For: The Washington Center for Real Estate Research is only one element of a comprehensive real estate program at Washington State University. The program is the only active four-year program in real estate in the region. The center augments the academic program by providing internship opportunities for students. The center develops and distributes information about real estate markets, the real estate industry, and real estate education. The center is a great resource in the state's efforts to provide affordable housing. The Washington Association of Realtors support the center and the proposal to pay a \$10 fee for its support.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Glenn Crellin, Washington State University; Gale Sullenberger, Washington State University; Syd Beckett, Department of Licensing; Glen Hudson, Washington Association of Realtors; Chris Wronski, WCRER Board; and Kim Hariman, WSHFC.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill by Committee on Higher Education be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 29 members: Representatives Huff, Chairman; Alexander, Vice Chairman; Clements, Vice Chairman; Wensman, Vice Chairman; H. Sommers, Ranking Minority Member; Doumit, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Gombosky, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Benson; Carlson; Chopp; Cody; Cooke; Crouse; Grant; Keiser; Kenney; Kessler; Linville; Lisk; Mastin; McMorris; Parlette; Poulsen; Regala; D. Schmidt; Sehlin; Sheahan; Talcott and Tokuda.

Staff: Mary Alice Grobins (786-7118).

Summary of Recommendation of Committee on Appropriations Compared to Recommendation of Committee on Higher Education: No new changes were recommended.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Realtors support this bill because the Real Estate Research Center makes a valuable contribution. The House Higher Education Committee added the study of affordable housing and real estate research in economically isolated communities. The Association of Realtors unanimously voted to support the bill and realtors will pay for the center through a fee on licenses and licenses renewals. The legislation does not affect the general fund. Grants from the Department of Licensing have been dwindling. In other states, similar research efforts are funded by \$15-\$20 fees, but the center feels it can operate with a \$10 fee.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Bryan Wahl, Washington Association of Realtors; and Glenn Crellin, Washington Center for Real Estate Research, WSU.