

HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS

SJB 8029

Brief Description: Regarding a petition to authorize federal block grant funds directly to school districts.

Sponsors: Senators McDonald and Oke.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Meeting Date: *February 24, 1998.*

Analysis Prepared by: *Jim Morishima (786-7191).*

Background: *In 1997, Senator Slade Gorton proposed an amendment in the United States Senate that would allow the Secretary of Education to award a block grant to local educational agencies to enable the local educational agencies to support programs or activities for kindergarten through grade 12 students that the local educational agencies deem appropriate.— The block grant would have come from funds originally intended for the Department of Education, the Department of Labor, and the Department of Health and Human Services to support programs or activities for kindergarten through grade 12 students. However, Senator Gorton's amendment was not included in the final legislation.*

Summary of Bill: *The memorial makes several findings. The Tenth Amendment to the United States Constitution gives the states those rights not enumerated in the Constitution. Therefore, the education of children is the primary responsibility of the state. Since meeting the educational needs of students is a problem that differs among school districts, local school districts are better equipped to handle the problem than the federal government. The increasing amount of federal regulation in education has inhibited the development of innovative programs and forced school districts to spend a large proportion of their budgets feeding the growing bureaucracy.*

Senator Gorton's amendment would have consolidated the large number of government programs and block granted the funds to the local school districts who could best decide how they would be used.

The memorial requests that the President of the United States and the United States Congress reconsider Senator Gorton's amendment.

Appropriation: *None.*

Fiscal Note: *Not requested.*

