

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5071

As Passed Senate, February 12, 1997

Title: An act relating to school district territory included in city and town boundary extensions.

Brief Description: Changing provisions relating to territory included in city and town boundary extensions.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Senators Stevens, Haugen and Hochstatter; by request of Board of Education).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Education: 1/24/97, 1/28/97 [DPS].
Passed Senate, 2/12/97, 48-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5071 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Hochstatter, Chair; Finkbeiner, Vice Chair; Goings, Johnson, McAuliffe, Rasmussen and Zarelli.

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

Background: Under current law, the Legislature does not set school boundaries, but has established statutory procedures for changing school district boundaries.

Generally, each city or town is required to be in one school district. If a city or town extends its limits to include any part of a school district operating on one site— then the annexed property automatically becomes part of the school district containing the city or town.

If a town extends its limits to include any part of a school district operating on more than one site then the issue goes before the regional committee of the educational service district. The regional committee decides which school district will contain the annexed property. The members of the regional committee are selected by the boards of directors of the school districts in the educational service district.

Summary of Bill: The automatic transfer of annexed property of a one-site school district to an annexing city or town is changed. If a city or town annexes property in a one-site school district and the annexed property contains a school building then the regional committee shall have the discretion to decide which school district will contain the property.

The provision permitting the regional committee to decide which school district will contain annexed property when a town extends its limits to include any part of a school district operating on more than one site remains unchanged.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: This bill changes the decision process for changing a school district's boundaries from a state-level mandate to a local-level decision by a citizen board. The bill recognizes that no school district boundary change is the same as another and that the decision is best made at the local level. The bill protects a one-site school district from automatically being dismantled by a city's annexation.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Stevens, prime sponsor (pro); Bobbie May, State Board of Education member (pro); Wayne Robertson, Superintendent, Lakewood School District (pro); John Davis, Clover Park School District (pro); Dwayne Slate, WSSDA (pro); Bob Kraski, Mayor, City of Arlington (pro); Linda Byrnes, Superintendent, Arlington School District (pro); Dave Zabell, City of Marysville (pro); Neil Knutson, Save our Community and Schools (pro).

House Amendment(s): The amendment changes the process for changing school district boundaries by permitting the State Board of Education to modify school district boundaries if one of the districts includes territory located in a city with a population of less than 3,000 and one of the districts has territory in or adjacent to a U.S. military base. A moratorium is placed on school district boundary changes beginning on the effective date of the act through June 1998, except for pre-existing transfer proposals and proposals involving a school district in a city with a population of less than 3,000 and a school district with territory in or adjacent to a U.S. military base. The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee is directed to conduct a study of the school district boundary process and report to the Legislature by January 1998.