

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5333

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Education, March 4, 1997

Title: An act relating to prohibiting discrimination against students educated in private, parochial, and home-based instruction.

Brief Description: Prohibiting discrimination against students educated in private, parochial, and home-based instruction.

Sponsors: Senators Stevens, Zarelli, Roach, Oke, Hochstatter, Hargrove, Johnson, Prince, Swecker, Rossi, Schow and Benton.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Education: 2/27/97, 3/4/97 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

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

Staff: Karen Carter (786-7424)

Background: Under current law, home schooled students are not required to meet student learning goals, master academic learning requirements, or take statewide assessment tests to obtain a certificate of mastery (Chapter 28A.200.010 (3) RCW). Private schools may voluntarily choose to have their students master the state's essential academic learning requirements, take the related assessments and obtain, if passed, a certificate of mastery (Chapter 28A.195.010 (6) RCW).

State law requires that public school students be awarded a certificate of mastery for successful completion of the high school assessment (Chapter 28A.630.885 (3)(c)). The high school assessment instrument is currently under development. The certificate of mastery will be implemented once the State Board of Education (SBE) determines that the assessment is sufficiently reliable and valid.

Most students are expected to obtain a certificate about the age of 16, and upon completion, schools must allow students to pursue career as well as education objectives through programs such as work-based learning, school-to-work transition, tech prep, college, community college or university education.

Summary of Bill: Current laws are modified for students and graduates of a home-based, parochial or private school.

Benefits, access or opportunities afforded to public school students who obtain a certificate of mastery cannot be denied to a home, parochial or private school student who passes a standardized or objective, knowledge-based test instrument approved by the State Board of Education.

It is unlawful to discriminate in "equal access or opportunity" against students who receive private, parochial or home-based instruction.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested

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

Testimony For: While private and home-schooled students do not have to participate in the certificate of mastery effort, this means nothing if those students are denied a job, a college placement or some other future opportunity simply because the youth does not hold a certificate of mastery. Legal protection is needed. Of further concern is the experimental nature of education reform. This bill preserves the right of private and home schools to use another objective, knowledge-based standard test if their students would like to receive a Washington certificate of mastery.

Testimony Against: None

Testified: PRO: Senator Stevens, prime sponsor; Barb Grams; Lori Coombs, Tutor Instructor; DiAnna Brannan.