

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5587

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Education, February 27, 1997

Title: An act relating to the certificate of mastery.

Brief Description: Changing provisions relating to the certificate of mastery.

Sponsors: Senators Hochstatter, Zarelli, Stevens and Johnson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Education: 2/20/97, 2/27/97 [DP, DNP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

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

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Goings, McAuliffe and Rasmussen.

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

Background: The Commission on Student Learning (CSL) must develop a Certificate of Mastery (COM) as part of the new student assessment system being developed under the education reform legislation. The COM is to be evidence that the student has successfully mastered the essential academic learning requirements and successfully completed the high school assessment. It is anticipated that most students will obtain the COM at about the age of 16. Achievement of a COM is a high school graduation requirement, but not the only requirement.

Summary of Bill: The provisions providing for a COM are eliminated.

The CSL must require that the results of a student's annual eleventh grade assessment is printed on the back of the student's high school diploma. The student's attendance for the last year of high school must also be printed as a fraction of the total teaching days.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 10, 1997.

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

Testimony For: The certificate of mastery is a one size fits all document. Everyone gets one, but it does not tell employers very much. If the student's attendance was printed on the diploma, then an employer would at least know if the student shows up. That is

important. Why have three certificates that tell you nothing about the student (the diploma, the certificate of mastery, and the GED) instead of one that provides some meaningful information (a diploma with the student's achievement level on a nationally normed test).

Testimony Against: This bill undercuts all the components of education reform and especially the component of accountability by eliminating the certificate of mastery. It sends the message that this state is not serious about raising the academic standards for the students in our schools. The Legislature set up a process to develop what students need to know, how student knowledge would be assessed, and a way students could show that they did acquire that knowledge. This bill is premature. Let the Commission on Student Learning define what the certificate of mastery is before you say it does not tell you meaningful information.

Testified: Senator Hochstatter, prime sponsor (pro); Phil Bussey, WA Roundtable (con); Terry Brighton, American Electronics Association (con); Lloyd Gardner, Concerned About Schools, Federal Way (pro); Sidnee Andersen, UWSA (pro).