

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5170

As Passed Senate, March 9, 1999

Title: An act relating to procedures for changing the names of school districts.

Brief Description: Changing provisions for school district name changes.

Sponsors: Senators Haugen, McAuliffe, T. Sheldon, Deccio and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Education: 2/3/99, 2/15/99 [DP].

Passed Senate, 3/9/99, 49-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Eide, Vice Chair; Bauer, Benton, Brown, Finkbeiner, Goings, Kohl-Welles, Rasmussen, Sellar, Swecker and Zarelli.

Staff: Natalie Adams (786-7444)

Background: Currently, Washington law provides a method to change the name of a school district: 10 percent of the registered voters in the district must petition the school board and submit a proposed new name. The school board must accept or reject the petition. If the petition is rejected, the board's decision is not appealable. If the petition is accepted, the board shall hold a public hearing where the proposed name change may be heard. Within two weeks after the hearing, the board shall select a name to present to the voters at the next special or general election. If a majority of the voters approve the proposed name change, the new name shall be recorded in the school district office and all interested state officials and institutions shall be notified.

Summary of Bill: The board of directors may change the name of the school district if 10 percent of the district's registered voters submit a petition including a proposed new name, or if the board passes a motion to hold a hearing to change the district name. In either case, the board must hold a public hearing regarding the proposed name change within one month of receiving the petition. A majority of the board may vote to adopt the new name. If the new name is adopted, the new name must be recorded in the school district office and interested state officials must be notified.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This bill will allow school directors to change the name of the school district without the vote of the people. The reason this bill is proposed is that the current system, which requires that any name change receive an election, is a financially cumbersome process. We feel the money spent on an election process would be better used at the school level.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Senator Haugen, prime sponsor; Mary Beth Fisher, Ray Reid, Stanwood School District.