

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6417

As Passed Senate, February 8, 2000

Title: An act relating to the education help line.

Brief Description: Requiring establishment of a toll-free educational help line.

Sponsors: Senators McAuliffe, Eide, Loveland, Patterson, Costa, Prentice, Fraser, Kline, Rasmussen, Brown, Kohl-Welles, Bauer, B. Sheldon, Winsley and Goings.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Education: 1/17/2000, 1/24/2000 [DP].
Passed Senate, 2/8/2000, 46-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Eide, Vice Chair; Brown, Finkbeiner, Hochstatter, Kohl-Welles, Rasmussen, Swecker and Zarelli.

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

Background: In the 1993 Education Reform Act (Chapter 336, Laws of 1993), the Center for the Improvement of Student Learning was created within the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. The primary purpose of the center is to provide assistance and advice to parents, school board members, educators, and the public regarding strategies for assisting students in learning the Essential Academic Learning Requirements.

Summary of Bill: The center must establish, maintain, and staff full-time a help line with a toll-free phone number for parents, students, and interested citizens who have questions about education.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 14, 2000.

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

Testimony For: The availability of information about education services and processes is often limited, especially in rural areas. Getting such information usually requires long distance phone calls to many sources. This is expensive, it costs both time and money. The frustration experienced by parents because of these inefficient and ineffective ways to communicate information could be avoided if parents had one place they could get information to answer their questions free of charge. A toll-free phone number would provide needed support to parents and a link between the citizens of the state and the educators who diligently serve our children. One concern about the bill is that it does not

specify that school employees could also use the help line to find answers to their questions too.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Katie Dolan, The Chain Reaction, a citizen's advocacy group; Diana Naputi-Lord, grandparent; Judy Walson, parent; Joan Yoshitomi, OSPI; Shari White, citizen; Nancy Vernon, parent; Gary King, WEA.