

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6747

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Higher Education, February 4, 2000

**Title:** An act relating to establishing a working relationship between the high technology industry and the higher education community.

**Brief Description:** Establishing a working relationship between the high technology industry and the higher education community.

**Revised for 1 Substitute:** Strengthening the working relationship between the high technology industry and the higher education community.

**Sponsors:** Senators Kohl-Welles, Jacobsen, Sheahan, Shin, B. Sheldon, McAuliffe, Horn, Finkbeiner, Winsley, Costa and Rasmussen.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Higher Education: 1/31/2000, 2/4/2000 [DPS].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6747 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Kohl-Welles, Chair; Shin, Vice Chair; Bauer, Finkbeiner, Horn, Jacobsen, McAuliffe, Sheahan and B. Sheldon.

**Staff:** Jean Six (786-7423)

**Background:** A number of studies and reports support evidence that a technical workforce shortage is pervasive throughout the high technology industry, not only in Washington, but throughout the nation. In Washington between 1990 and 1997, the number of jobs grew 59 percent, from 60,000 to more than 100,000 persons while the number of degrees produced increased only 3 percent, with 3,300 graduates in 1990 and 3,600 in 1997. Washington is 21<sup>st</sup> in terms of high technology degree production and 16<sup>th</sup> in high technology employment.

The Legislature and Governor acted in the 1999 session to appropriate \$2 million for the development and enlargement of computer software engineering programs in the university system. In addition, the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) was given 500 new enrollments to distribute to expand student access to high-demand academic and job-training programs. The HECB received proposals for 41 specific projects and all but 10 were for expanded instruction or new programs related to information technology. Eight of the 10 projects selected for the additional FTEs are high technology related.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** The Legislature believes that continuing to strengthen the working relationship between the high technology industry and the higher education community is essential to Washington's future.

Beginning in April 2000, the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB), the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), the Washington Software Alliance, the American Electronic Association, and the Washington Biotechnology and Biomedical Association must convene a work group in consultation with the Council of Presidents (COP) and its member institutions, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), the Washington Federation of Career Schools and Colleges, the Washington Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, and representatives from the high technology industries. The conveners must report on the progress of the work group to the fiscal and higher education committees by December 1, 2000.

The work group is directed to: (1) review the needs of the various high technology industries and the roles of various higher education institutions in meeting those needs, (2) establish priorities including but not limited to an inventory of higher education high technology programs and offerings, (3) develop strategies to address high technology needs, including but not limited to employment demand, and (4) develop an implementation plan for the higher education institutions and industry to enhance opportunities for action by the state, the institutions, and industry to better meet the identified needs.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** The original bill was not considered.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For:** The workforce shortage is real. Thank you for encouraging a dialogue and providing a process. WSA is committed to both the dialogue and the process. Should there be more than one technology representative acting as a convener.

Building on the work of the 2020 Commission and the AEA. There is a significant pipeline problem and it is not just an access issue. Students are not choosing these programs in great enough numbers. We need strong graduates, not just any graduate. Research institutions play more than a workforce role.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** PRO: Andrew Fry, WA Software Alliance; Ed Lazowska, Chair, CSER, UW; Susannah Malarkey, Technology Alliance; Dennis Brewer, American Electronics Assn.