

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESSCR 8422

As Passed Senate, February 9, 2000

Brief Description: Creating a committee to improve tribal relations.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Judiciary (originally sponsored by Senators T. Sheldon, Swecker, Fraser, Oke, Kohl-Welles, B. Sheldon, Snyder, Spanel, Heavey, Thibaudeau, Rossi, Prentice, Hale, Fairley, Morton, McAuliffe, Gardner, Rasmussen, Jacobsen, Haugen, Eide, Kline, Patterson, Franklin, Winsley and Costa).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Judiciary: 1/17/2000, 1/24/2000 [DPS].
Passed Senate, 2/9/2000, 47-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 8422 be substituted therefor, and the substitute concurrent resolution do pass.

Signed by Senators Heavey, Chair; Kline, Vice Chair; Costa, Goings, Hargrove, Haugen, Long, McCaslin and Thibaudeau.

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

Background: The Legislature recognizes 28 federally recognized Indian tribes in Washington with a combined population of approximately 91,000 members. These tribes have governmental operations with responsibilities to their citizens and their lands similar to those of Washington.

Summary of Bill: The Legislature recognizes that the intergovernmental relationships between the tribes and the Legislature have seen limited development and that there is a need to educate the Legislature and legislative staff on the operations of the tribal governments, as well as to educate the tribal elected officials and their staff on the operations of the Legislature.

A joint select committee on legislative/tribal relations is established to review, study, and recommend how the Legislature and tribes may develop more effective relationships and cooperative mechanisms to address common issues. The intergovernmental methods used by other states and tribal governments shall be studied and the committee may seek out others with expertise on the subject.

The 12-member committee is comprised of four Senators appointed by the President of the Senate, four Representatives appointed by the Co-speakers of the House of Representatives, and four elected officials from among the 28 tribes appointed by the Chair of the Association of Washington Tribes. The Governor may appoint an ad hoc representative.

The committee is co-chaired by a tribal and a legislative member. The expenses are paid by the Legislature and staff support is provided by the Senate Committee Services, the Office of Program Research, and the Northwest Indian Applied Research Institute.

The committee presents a report and recommendations to the Legislature not later than December 1, 2000, and the committee ceases to exist on December 15, 2000.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 13, 2000.

Testimony For: The state and the tribes need to establish a strong relationship and foundation for the future. Communication must continue between governments even if, at times, we must agree to disagree.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Senator Tim Sheldon, prime sponsor; Randy Scott, Quinault Indian Nation; Alan Parker, The Evergreen State College; Brian Cladoosby, Chair, Swinomish Tribe, President, Association of Washington Tribes.