

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1910

As Reported by House Committee On:
Higher Education

Title: An act relating to graduate education in physical therapy.

Brief Description: Authorizing doctorate level degrees in physical therapy at Eastern Washington University.

Sponsors: Representatives Kenney (co-prime sponsor), Cox (co-prime sponsor), Schoesler, Schindler, Benson, Gombosky, McMorris, Skinner, Fromhold, Dunn, Jarrett, Crouse, Lantz, Sump, Ogden, Ahern, Bush, Esser and Wood.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 2/19/01, 2/23/01 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes the Board of Trustees of Eastern Washington University to offer a doctorate level degree in physical therapy subject to review and approval by the Higher Education Coordinating Board.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Cox, Republican Co-Chair; Kenney, Democratic Co-Chair; Gombosky, Democratic Vice Chair; Jarrett, Republican Vice Chair; Dunn, Fromhold, Lantz and Skinner.

Staff: Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

Background:

Currently, statute allows the regional universities, including Eastern Washington University, to offer bachelor's and master's level degrees. Washington State University and the University of Washington are authorized to offer bachelor's, master's, and doctorate degrees.

The University of Washington offers both master's and doctorate degrees in physical

therapy. Their doctorate degree is a Ph.D. which is a post-professional degree. The only other university in Washington that offers a physical therapy program is the University of Puget Sound, and they currently offer a master's level degree.

Regionally, universities that offer physical therapy programs are planning to convert to a doctorate in physical therapy (DPT) program, or are already in stages of conversion including: Pacific University, Idaho State University, the University of Montana, the University of Colorado, and Northern Arizona University.

The National Accrediting Association for Physical Therapy has announced that the profession is moving to a DPT as the entry-level degree.

Summary of Bill:

This bill authorizes the Board of Trustees at Eastern Washington University to offer a doctorate degree in physical therapy. The program must meet the program approval requirements of the Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Eastern Washington University proposes to offer a DPT which is a professional degree.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: It is imperative that EWU offer a doctorate degree in physical therapy because the overall profession is moving a DPT as an entry-level degree. Already, many programs across the United States have converted or are converting their programs to a doctorate level. It makes sense to look to the future and think about granting all the regional universities authority to offer professional doctorate degrees.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representatives Cox, co-prime sponsor and Kenney, co-prime sponsor; Mike Ormsby, Walt Erikson, and Ron Dalla, Eastern Washington University; Bruce Botka, Higher Education Coordinating Board; Mike Johnson, Associated Students of Eastern Washington University; Terry Teale, Council of Presidents; and Melissa Johnson, Physical Therapy Association of Washington.