

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6650

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Education, February 7, 2002

Title: An act relating to classroom remembrances of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

Brief Description: Allowing for adoption of classroom policies to remember the September 11 terrorist attacks.

Sponsors: Senators Shin, Sheahan, Long, McAuliffe, Eide, Keiser, Benton, Oke and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Education: 2/7/02 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6650 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Eide, Vice Chair; Carlson, Finkbeiner, Hewitt, Hochstatter, Johnson, Kastama, Kohl-Welles, Rasmussen, and Zarelli.

Staff: Kelly Simpson (786-7403)

Background: Under current law, school districts must hold flag exercises in each classroom at the beginning of each school day and before school assemblies during which students wishing to participate may recite the pledge of allegiance. Students not reciting the pledge must maintain a respectful silence. Additionally, the pledge of allegiance or the national anthem must be conducted before interschool events, when feasible.

Summary of Substitute Bill: School districts may adopt policies providing for an annual moment of silence in each classroom to remember the victims of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. If school districts choose to adopt policies, the policies must encourage the creation of student committees to establish additional remembrance activities.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The "minute" of silence allowed for in the bill was changed to "moment" of silence. Policies adopted by school districts must encourage the creation of student committees for the purposes of considering additional remembrance activities.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Students submitted this legislation to the sponsor as an honorable gesture in order to encourage students in Washington schools to remember the horrific events of September 11, 2001. In doing so, they demonstrated their patriotism and strong belief that the terrorist attacks should not be forgotten as it was an event that profoundly affected their generation. Additionally, the courts have upheld similar "minute of silence" laws, specifically Virginia's statute.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Senator Shin, prime sponsor; Peter Hennessy; Daniel Marx; Jim Musladin; Rainer Houser, AWSP; Barbara Mertens, WASA..