

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1229

As Passed House:

March 5, 2003

Title: An act relating to teacher cottages in second class school districts.

Brief Description: Authorizing teachers' cottages in second class school districts.

Sponsors: By Representatives Quall, Cox, Haigh, Tom, McDermott, Talcott, Hunter, Ruderman and Rockefeller.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/3/03, 2/13/03 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/5/03, 91-6.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes a second-class school district to construct teachers' cottages.
- Permits a second-class school district to place income from the rental or sale of teachers' cottages in its general fund.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; McDermott, Vice Chair; Talcott, Ranking Minority Member; Tom, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Cox, Haigh, Hunter, McMahan, Rockefeller and Santos.

Staff: Sydney Forrester (786-7120).

Background:

A second-class school district refers to a district with less than 2,000 students. Of the state's 296 school districts, approximately 196 are second-class districts. Some of these second-class districts may operate out of a single building and employ just two or three teachers. A 1969 state law requires a second-class school district to build teachers' cottages when directed by a vote of the district to do so.

The school board of a second-class district is authorized to purchase property for any district purpose. When a district sells its real property, it may place income from the sale of district property only in the district's debt service fund or its capital projects fund, and may not place that income in its general fund.

Summary of Bill:

A board of directors for a second-class school district is authorized to construct teachers' cottages without direction by a vote from the district. Rental income and other income, including income from the sale of cottages, may be deposited in whole or in part in the district's general fund, its debt service fund, or its capital projects fund.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: It sometimes is difficult for teachers to purchase living quarters in districts located on small islands where real estate is expensive. Sometimes local citizens provide rentals for teachers, but this is not necessarily a stable source of teacher housing. The bill provides flexibility for local districts to build teacher cottages and place the income from the rental or sale in the district's general fund. Teacher applicants have withdrawn employment applications when they realize they can't live in the community in which they teach, or if the commute is particularly long. The local community has a strong interest in having the teachers live in the community. When the money to construct the cottages comes from the district's general fund, the district wants to put the money back in its general fund for the maintenance and operation of keeping the school running.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Quall, prime sponsor; Chuck Vande Wetering, Shaw Island School District; and Malcolm Lea, Shaw Island School District.