
HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 4027

State of Washington 58th Legislature 2003 Regular Session

By Representatives Anderson, Haigh, Tom, Santos, Jarrett, Quall,
Nixon, Cairnes, Talcott and Moeller

Read first time 04/23/2003. Referred to Committee on Finance.

1 TO THE HONORABLE GEORGE W. BUSH, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,
2 AND TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE AND THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF
3 REPRESENTATIVES, AND TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
4 UNITED STATES, IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED:

5 We, your Memorialists, the Senate and House of Representatives of
6 the State of Washington, in legislative session assembled, respectfully
7 represent and petition as follows:

8 WHEREAS, For many years western states have grappled with the
9 challenge of providing the best education for their citizens; and

10 WHEREAS, Western states face unique challenges in achieving this
11 goal; and

12 WHEREAS, From 1979 to 1998 the percent change in expenditures per
13 pupil in 13 western states was 28 percent, compared to 57 percent in
14 the remaining states; and

15 WHEREAS, In 2000-01, the pupil per teacher ratio in 13 western
16 states averaged 17.9 percent to one compared with 14.8 percent to one
17 in the remaining states; and

18 WHEREAS, The conditions in western states are exacerbated by
19 projections that enrollment will increase by an average of 7.1 percent,

1 compared to an average decrease of 2.6 percent in the rest of the
2 nation; and

3 WHEREAS, Despite the wide disparities in expenditures per pupil and
4 pupil per teacher ratio, western states tax at a comparable rate and
5 allocate as much of their budgets to public education as the rest of
6 the nation; and

7 WHEREAS, The ability of western states to fund education is
8 directly related to federal ownership of state lands; and

9 WHEREAS, The federal government owns an average of 51.9 percent of
10 the land in 13 western states, compared to 4.1 percent in the remaining
11 states; and

12 WHEREAS, The enabling acts of most western states promise that 5
13 percent of the proceeds from the sale of federal lands will go to the
14 states for public education; and

15 WHEREAS, A federal policy change in 1976 ended these sales
16 resulting in an estimated 14 billion dollars in lost public education
17 funding for western states; and

18 WHEREAS, The ability of western states to fund public education is
19 further impacted by the fact that state and local property taxes, which
20 public education relies heavily upon to fund education, cannot be
21 assessed on federal lands; and

22 WHEREAS, The estimated annual impact of this property tax
23 prohibition on western states is over 4 billion dollars; and

24 WHEREAS, The federal government shares only half of its royalty
25 revenue with the states; and

26 WHEREAS, Royalties are further reduced because federal lands are
27 less likely to be developed and federal laws often place stipulations
28 on the use of state royalty payments; and

29 WHEREAS, The estimated annual impact of royalty payment policies on
30 western states is over 1.86 billion dollars; and

31 WHEREAS, Much of the land that the federal government transferred
32 to states upon statehood as a trust for public education is difficult
33 to administer and to make productive because it is surrounded by
34 federal land; and

35 WHEREAS, Federal land ownership greatly hinders the ability of
36 western states to fund public education; and

37 WHEREAS, The federal government should compensate western states

1 for the significant impact federal land ownership has on the ability of
2 western states to educate its citizens; and

3 WHEREAS, Just compensation will allow western states to be on equal
4 footing with the rest of the nation in their efforts to provide
5 education for their citizens;

6 NOW, THEREFORE, Your Memorialists respectfully pray that the United
7 States Congress appropriate just compensation to the state of
8 Washington for the impact of federal land ownership on the state's
9 ability to fund public education.

10 BE IT RESOLVED, That copies of this Memorial be immediately
11 transmitted to the Honorable George W. Bush, President of the United
12 States, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the
13 House of Representatives, and each member of Congress from the State of
14 Washington.

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