

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5022

As of February 7, 2005

Title: An act relating to student membership on governing boards of institutions of higher education.

Brief Description: Providing for a two-year term of office for student members of governing boards of institutions of higher education.

Sponsors: Senators Jacobsen and Spanel.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education: 2/4/05.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING, K-12 & HIGHER EDUCATION

Staff: Heather Lewis-Lechner (786-7448)

Background: Under current law the governance of each of the higher education institutions is vested in either a board of regents or a board of trustees. Each of the two research universities have a board of regents while the regional universities and The Evergreen State College each have a board of trustees. The boards of regents consist of ten members while the boards of trustees consist of eight members. Each of the governing boards has one student member who holds his or her office for a term of one year.

Summary of Bill: The student member on the governing boards for the institutions of higher education may serve for a term of up to two years. Each of the governing boards shall determine the length of the student term.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Testimony For: None.

Testimony Against: If this bill were to pass, there could be an incentive to only appoint students with two years of school left and that greatly reduces who can apply and reduces the talent pool. This could potentially limit community college transfer students from being able to apply as well as some graduate students who only have one year of graduate studies. Additionally, this is a challenging responsibility and a sophomore may not be prepared to take on this challenge. The position is very demanding and while a student can mitigate the impact the position has on one year of studies it might be too much to mitigate for two years and could detrimentally impact a student's studies. There are also some problems with allowing

the board to decide if a student serves for two years or one because a student who wants to stay for the full two years may not feel that he or she can speak freely and disagree with the rest of board. As the bill is written right now there is no minimum term mentioned and the students have worked hard to get the one year minimum that is in current law and would hate to lose that. On a technical note, if the statute is going to be amended the legislature might want to consider having the appointments start earlier than June so that the student member can be involved in budget decisions. Since budgeting occurs in July, the student member currently does not have enough knowledge of the issues to really participate effectively.

Who Testified: CON: Kelsey Knowles, ASUW President; Alex Bolton, UW Regent. Other: Edie Harding, TESC.