

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SCR 8401

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education, February 23, 2005

**Brief Description:** Creating a joint select committee concerning Latino accessibility to higher education.

**Sponsors:** Senators Jacobsen, Prentice, Poulsen, Fairley, Kline and Schmidt.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education: 2/14/05, 2/23/05 [DP].

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

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Pridemore, Vice Chair; Weinstein, Vice Chair; Berkey, Eide, Kohl-Welles, Mulliken, Rasmussen, Rockefeller and Schoesler.

**Staff:** Ingrid Mungia (786-7423)

**Background:** According to the United States Census Bureau, the Latino population is the largest minority ethnic group in the United States, and will continue to grow more than any other group over the next several decades. The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) projects that 73 percent more Latino students will be graduating from public high schools in 2014 than in 2002. The Higher Education Coordinating Board reports that Latino students make up 3.7 percent of the public four-year institutions population, 4.5 percent of the independent institutions, and 9.5 percent of the public two-year population. According to the Pew Hispanic Center, although Latino students enroll in higher education at rates similar to non-Hispanic white peers, they are only half as likely to complete a bachelor's degree as their counterparts.

**Summary of Bill:** In consultation with the Washington State Commission on Hispanic Affairs, a joint select committee on Latino accessibility to higher education is established to: (1) increase awareness throughout the educational pipeline about the challenges facing the Latino community; (2) close the generational information gap within the Latino community; (3) close the generational information gap within the Latino community about the cost of and accessibility to higher education; (4) investigate ways to provide an appropriate level of financial aid to help Latinos enroll in and graduate from Washington State institutions of higher education; (5) improve articulation and communication between two-year and four-year institutions of higher education regarding higher education issues especially important to the Latino community; and (6) develop and propose strategies for helping Latino students achieve at high academic levels.

The committee will consist of eight members, four members each selected by the President of the Senate and by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The committee must report its findings and recommendations to the Legislature at the regular legislative session in 2007.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on February 14, 2005.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** Yes.

**Testimony For:** Too few Hispanics are enrolling in postsecondary education. Of those that do enroll, too few are completing their programs. These students do not receive the guidance necessary to be prepared for success in postsecondary education. It is becoming apparent that some form of postsecondary education is necessary to make a livable wage in today's economy. If Hispanic students do not receive the guidance, financial support, access, and instructional support necessary, too few will continue to complete their postsecondary programs and, thus, not be able to fully participate in our economy.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Who Testified:** PRO: David Prince, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges