

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2295

As Reported by House Committee On:
Higher Education

Title: An act relating to assessing the higher education needs of the Olympic and Kitsap peninsulas.

Brief Description: Assessing the higher education needs of the Olympic and Kitsap peninsulas.

Sponsors: Representatives Seaquist, Rolfes, Lantz, Appleton, Haigh, Eickmeyer, Kessler and VanDeWege.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 2/27/07 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Provides for a study of the higher education needs of the Olympic and Kitsap Peninsulas.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Wallace, Chair; Sells, Vice Chair; Hasegawa, McIntire and Sommers.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Anderson, Ranking Minority Member; Buri, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Jarrett and Roberts.

Staff: Andrew Colvin (786-7304).

Background:

The Olympic and Kitsap Peninsulas are presently served by three public colleges: Olympic College, Peninsula College, and Grays Harbor College. The closest public four-year institutions are the University of Washington Tacoma and The Evergreen State College in Olympia.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Summary of Bill:

The Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) assesses the higher education needs in Kitsap, Mason, Jefferson, and Clallam counties and recommends solutions to the higher education needs of the area. Solutions that the HECB considers include: establishment of new baccalaureate institutions; expansion of existing institutions to include baccalaureate degrees; and co-location of institutions. The HECB may contract for an assessment of sites to meet higher education needs in the counties.

In conducting the assessment and siting study, the HECB consults with the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, the local business community, and the existing research and comprehensive institutions. The HECB assembles a local advisory committee to assist in the conduct of the assessment and siting study. The committee includes:

- one city official from each city within the four counties;
- two members of the House of Representatives;
- two members of the Senate; and
- eight education or business leaders from within each of the four counties.

The recommendations to the Legislature must include:

- the type of baccalaureate institution or institutions to be established;
- a business and operations plan for the institution if a new institution is recommended;
- potential sites for establishment of an institution;
- identification of site acquisition costs; and
- identification of costs and a process for completing a master plan for higher education expansion.

The HECB presents an interim report to the Legislature and the Governor by January 15, 2008, and a final report by December 1, 2008.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The need is clear. It has been shown that we need to increase the number of students receiving bachelor's degrees here in Washington. Residents of the Kitsap and Olympic Peninsulas need better access to institutions where they can obtain a bachelor's degree. This bill will provide an opportunity to study the available options and help to figure how and where. For students who live on the peninsulas, it is difficult to commute to any of the four-year public colleges in Seattle, Tacoma, or Olympia. The Baccalaureate Task Force includes all four counties mentioned in this bill. Studies have been done verifying the need

for a four-year program in this area, and this would provide a welcome opportunity to have the assistance of the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) in sorting through the options. However, it is important to place this into a larger context, and consider the needs and opportunities in the region within the larger framework of the state's higher education system. In line with this, the Senate's version of this bill includes consideration of "adjacent counties" in this process. The HECB would also encourage some clarification in this bill regarding the makeup of the advisory committee.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Seaquist, prime sponsor; Charlotte Garrido, Washington State University Kitsap Extension; and Chris Thompson, Higher Education and Coordinating Board.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.