

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1778

As Reported by House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to modernizing Washington state history and government course requirements for high school graduation.

Brief Description: Modernizing Washington state history and government high school graduation requirements.

Sponsors: Representatives Wallace, Dunn, Kenney, Haigh, Hasegawa, B. Sullivan, Darneille, McDermott, Takko, Roberts, Schual-Berke and Santos.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/15/07, 2/20/07 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Revises high school graduation requirements to include a course that covers Washington State and the global economy.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; Barlow, Vice Chair; Priest, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Haigh, McDermott, Santos and P. Sullivan.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Roach.

Staff: Andrew Colvin (786-7304).

Background:

High school graduation requirements are established by the State Board of Education. Current graduation requirements include 2.5 credits in social studies, which must in turn include .5 credits in Washington State history and government. Course work in Washington State history and government must include study of the state's Constitution, and is encouraged to

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include information about the history, culture, and government of the American Indian people.

Summary of Bill:

The high school graduation requirements established by the State Board of Education shall include a course that covers Washington State and the global economy. Content of the course must include, but is not limited to:

- Washington State history and culture;
- the Constitution of Washington State and Washington State politics;
- Washington State geography; and
- commerce in Washington State and its place in a global economy.

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) shall develop a curriculum consistent with the specified course requirements and that meets the OSPI's requirements for classroom-based assessments. The OSPI shall make the curriculum available for voluntary use by school districts beginning with the 2008-09 school year.

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 current requirements lack relevance for many students. This isn't really changing the current requirements but is adding to them. There is currently no focus on the economy and how government works for people. Combining geography, government, and the economy will better connect students with our state, and will make the course challenging, relevant, and engaging. This will provide more connection for students with our political and government structures, and how those relate to the present and future. It will allow a needed update to history content, which could include more information about the history and culture of native peoples.

(With concerns) It's hard to speak against improving history course requirements, but the Superintendent of Public Instruction has been working on this issue as part of its overall social studies requirements. The social studies program is a series of courses designed to build on each other, with courses in the later high school grades tying it all together and applying what has been learned about history to the present and future. This is what the classroom-based assessments are designed to do, and they are hard at work on it.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Wallace, prime sponsor; Patti McMaster, Alina Buschin, and Amanda Peterson, Evergreen High School; and Miguel Perz-Gibson, Colville Tribes.

(With concerns) Kyra Kester, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.