

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 6313

As Passed House - Amended:

March 7, 2008

Title: An act relating to disability history month.

Brief Description: Recognizing disability history in the public education system.

Sponsors: By Senators McAuliffe, Rasmussen, Tom, Delvin, Shin, Kohl-Welles, Fairley and Fraser.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/26/08 [DP];

Appropriations Subcommittee on Education: 2/28/08 [DPA].

Floor Activity:

Passed House - Amended: 3/7/08, 94-0.

Brief Summary of Bill (As Amended by House)

- Requires public schools and public institutions of higher education to annually conduct or promote educational activities regarding disability history and people with disabilities.

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, Lias, Santos and Sullivan.

Staff: Cece Clynch (786-7195).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 18 members: Representatives Haigh, Chair; Sullivan, Vice Chair; Priest, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking

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Minority Member; Barlow, Crouse, Fromhold, Haler, Herrera, Hunter, Jarrett, Kagi, Kenney, Ormsby, Quall, Seaquist, Springer and Wallace.

Staff: Ben Rarick (786-7349).

Background:

According to the United States Census Bureau, in 2002 about 18 percent of Americans said that they had a disability and 12 percent had a severe disability. Over the last two decades, there has been growing emphasis on research, teaching, and scholarship on the history of people with disabilities, as well as the history of disability and related social and civil rights movements.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The Legislature finds that annual recognition, throughout the public education system, of disability history will:

- increase awareness and understanding of the contributions that people with disabilities have made to the state, nation, and world;
- increase respect and promote acceptance and inclusion of people with disabilities;
- inspire students with disabilities to feel a greater sense of pride;
- reduce harassment and bullying; and
- help keep students with disabilities in school.

Public schools and public institutions of higher education are required to conduct or promote educational activities that provide instruction, awareness, and understanding of disability history and people with disabilities. These activities shall take place annually during the month of October. They may include, but are not limited to, school assemblies or guest speaker presentations.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: (Education)

(In support) This bill will go a long way toward making sure that people with disabilities are treated with respect. On the surface, it may seem that it only makes a small change but it is a system changer. This doesn't have to cost a lot of money because there are a variety of different people and groups willing to participate, develop curricula, and offer lessons and activities. The veterans are also rallying around this bill and have offered to produce a one hour video to be shown in schools.

(Opposed) None.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: (Appropriations Subcommittee on Education)

(In support) It is important to recognize the unique challenges of persons with disabilities, just like African-Americans, women, and other groups that have history months. The Governor's Developmental Disability Council supports this bill and is willing to help identify instructional materials or provide other assistance to make the initiative successful. The Arc of Washington has developed various ways to provide disability history instruction through electronic games and the Internet that may be helpful in this initiative.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (Education) Skip Dreps, Paralyzed Veterans of America; Toby Olson, Governor's Commission on Disability Issues and Employment; Emily J. Rogers, Self-Advocated in Leadership; Christie Perkins, Washington State Special Education Coalition; and David Lord, Disability Rights Washington.

Persons Testifying: (Appropriations Subcommittee on Education) Emily Rogers, Arc of Washington; Jason Peterine, Self Advocates in Leadership; and Toby Olson, Governor's Committee on Disability.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: (Education) None.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: (Appropriations Subcommittee on Education) None.