

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5978

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Higher Education, February 21, 2007

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: Senators Kilmer, Rockefeller, Sheldon, Hargrove, Delvin, Berkey and Shin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 2/19/07, 2/21/07 [DPS-WM].
Ways & Means: 2/06/08.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5978 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Shin, Chair; Kilmer, Vice Chair; Delvin, Ranking Minority Member; Berkey, Schoesler and Sheldon.

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Staff: Tim Yowell (786-7435)

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.

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 colocation 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 education and training coordinating board,

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the local business community, and the existing research and comprehensive institutions. The board assembles a local advisory committee to assist in the conduct of the assessment and siting study. The committee includes: (1) one city official from each city within the four counties; (2) two members of the house of representatives; (3) two members of the senate; and (4) eight education or business leaders from within each of the four counties.

The recommendations to the Legislature must include: (1) The type of baccalaureate institution or institutions to be established; (2) a business and operations plan for the institution if a new institution is recommended; (3) potential sites for establishment of an institution; (4) identification of site acquisition costs; and (5) identification of costs and a process for completing a master plan for higher education expansion. The board presents an interim report to the Legislature and the Governor by January 15, 2008, and a final report by December 1, 2008.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY RECOMMENDED SUBSTITUTE AS PASSED COMMITTEE (Higher Education): The study will also consider the higher education needs of adjacent counties.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: Yes.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: There is a close relationship between higher education opportunities and economic development. This is a necessary first step in determining the need in this area and the appropriate response. The population growth projections in this area make this proposal most timely. Greater access to higher education in this area will allow these counties to more fully participate in the Washington economy.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Kilmer, prime sponsor; Ann Daley, HECB; Nathaniel Hong, Olympic College Faculty Union; Sharon Wylie, Kitsap County Board of Commissioners; Charlotte Cameron, Olympic College.