

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6698

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Higher Education, February 06, 2008

Title: An act relating to voter registration and informational activities at institutions of higher education.

Brief Description: Regarding voter registration and informational activities at institutions of higher education.

Sponsors: Senators Shin, Delvin, Murray and Kohl-Welles.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 1/30/08, 2/6/08 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6698 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

Background: In all counties, the county auditors are charged with ensuring that mail-in voter registration forms are readily available to the public. These forms are provided to city and town clerks, state offices, schools, fire stations, public libraries, and other locations considered appropriate by the county auditors or the Secretary of State. Institutions of higher education (institutions) must have prompts on the websites that ask students if they wish to register to vote.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Substitute): Institutions make voter registration forms available in prominent places on campus; develop and implement policies regarding the distribution of voter registration forms at the beginning of each term and in campus housing facilities; and collaborate with the student government associations to conduct nonpartisan voter information activities.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE (Recommended Substitute): County auditors are no longer assigned the specific duty of providing mail-in registration forms on campuses.

Appropriation: None.

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.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill: PRO: Democracy is important, and we should do all we can to encourage all citizens to exercise their right to vote. College students are receiving the education that makes them informed voters. Easily accessible information and registration will strengthen our democracy. People who do not vote, do not have a voice. Now is the time to invest in increased voter turnout.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Shin, prime sponsor; Snezhana Stadnik, Associated Students of Green River Community College; Andrew Monson, Associated Students of Pierce College; Marco Nunez, Associated Students of Green River Community College; Jake Stillwell, WSL; Suzanne Ames, SBCTC.