

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5827

As of February 8, 2010

Title: An act relating to appointing student members on the board of trustees for community colleges.

Brief Description: Appointing student members on the board of trustees for community colleges.

Sponsors: Senators Shin, Kilmer, McDermott and Marr.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education & Workforce Development: 2/20/09; 1/29/10.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

Background: The Higher Education Coordinating Board, University of Washington, Washington State University, the regional universities, and The Evergreen State College all have student members on their Boards of Trustees or Boards of Regents. There are no student members on the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) or on the boards for any of the community college districts.

There are no enumerated qualifications for board members at any of the institutions of higher education. Boards at community and technical colleges have five trustees, and must include at least one member from business and another from labor.

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

Summary of Bill (Proposed Substitute): By a majority vote, the boards of trustees in any college district may establish a sixth trustee position to be filled by a full-time student in good standing. The student trustee is selected, by the Governor, from a list of five candidates submitted by the student government of that college district and serves a one-year term or until the student member's successor is appointed and qualified, whichever is later. The student must excuse himself or herself from participation or voting on matters relating to the hiring, discipline, or tenure of faculty members and personnel.

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.

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges is expanded to include ten members, instead of nine, one of whom must be a student. The student member serves a one year term or until the student member's successor is appointed and qualified, whichever is later.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Student trustees would serve as citizens of the state, not as students. The boards are free to chose whether or not to have student members. Students can give valuable input. Community college students are just as able and willing to serve as students at four-year institutions as they do now. This will give students a better opportunity to learn how to participate in our society. Students should be represented at all levels. Students are personally committed to and invested in their schools. Higher education should empower students, not make them feel powerless.

OTHER: The State Board membership provision is mandatory and the process is unclear. There is not universal support among community college students for this bill. Sixty-two percent of community and technical college students are part-time students and would be precluded from being trustees. The majority of boards support the idea of student input, just not board membership. Most boards reach out to get student opinions.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Shin, prime sponsor; Jamie Marine, Marcus Sweetser, Peter Sterr, Jordan Johnson, Washington Student Association; Joseph Root, Brianne Wood, Bernard Elloua, Julie Rowe, students; Jacob Pelter; former student; Nathan Yaffee Bellevue College-Office of Student Legislative Affairs.

OTHER: Chris Reykdal, SBCTC; Erin Brown, Trustees Association.