

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESB 5925

As Passed Senate, March 9, 2009

Title: An act relating to insurance requirements for higher education students participating in study or research abroad.

Brief Description: Regarding insurance for higher education students participating in study or research abroad.

Sponsors: Senators Shin, Kastama, Jacobsen, Berkey, Hobbs, Franklin, Hargrove and Kohl-Welles; by request of University of Washington.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education & Workforce Development: 2/24/09 [DP, DNP, w/oRec].

Passed Senate: 3/09/09, 41-5.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Kilmer, Chair; Jarrett, Vice Chair; Jacobsen, Kastama, McAuliffe and Shin.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Pflug.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Becker, Ranking Minority Member; Hewitt and Stevens.

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

Background: Institutions of higher education (institutions) may make any type of insurance available for regents, trustees, and students. The premiums for the insurance are paid by the assenting regents, trustees, or students. The institutions may also make liability insurance available for their employees. The premiums on the liability insurance are paid by the institutions. At public four-year institutions, the governing boards may make available and pay the costs of health benefits for graduate students holding graduate service appointments and their immediate families.

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.

A number of students choose to participate in studies and research outside the United States. Some of these study or research abroad activities and student exchanges are administered by the institutions themselves while others are sponsored by independent organizations or the federal government. Many of the independent providers require proof of health insurance as a condition of participation. While many Washington institutions of higher education strongly encourage students to review their insurance coverage before participating in these overseas programs, they are not authorized to require insurance coverage.

Summary of Engrossed Bill: As a condition of participation in study or research abroad programs that are sponsored, arranged, or approved by the institution, the governing board of an institution of higher education may require its students to purchase approved insurance that will provide coverage for expenses incurred as a result of injury, illness, or death, if the student does not already have adequate insurance. The institution may bear all or part of the costs of the insurance.

Appropriation: None.

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: PRO: Many students are now traveling overseas in study abroad programs without adequate insurance coverage. All of the public institutions of higher education support this bill. Ultimately this will save money for many students who face health issues while they are studying abroad.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Shin, prime sponsor; Rabeca Bullock, University of Washington.