

SENATE BILL REPORT

SJM 8015

As of March 17, 2009

Brief Description: Petitioning the President and Secretary of Education to commence proceedings to engage the nation with an awakening dialogue about our education system.

Sponsors: Senators McAuliffe and Keiser.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 3/16/09.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

Background: A joint memorial is a message addressed to the President, Congress of the United States, or the head of a federal or state governmental agency asking for consideration of some matter of concern to the state or region. A joint memorial does not require the signature of the Governor.

Several local, national, and international studies confirm that teacher quality has the most significant impact on student achievement. In 2004 the Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession reported that when teachers were asked to rank their top three choices from a list of reasons for joining the profession, teachers commonly report either a desire to work with young people (67 percent ranked this first or second), or the value or significance of education in society (32 percent ranked this first or second). In 2007 the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction reported that 36 out of 49 teaching fields show some degree of shortage in Washington State.

Summary of Bill: It is requested that President Barack Obama and the federal Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, engage the nation regarding the critical role teachers play in the economic future; motivate the most talented citizens to become teachers; create a new culture of service and community engagement in order to increase the prestige and effectiveness of the education system; and create a discourse on what the education system is and needs to be.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: There is a need to create a greater respect for the teaching profession and a need to encourage discussion about education in the public, amongst higher education, and amongst students, who can tell us the things that made the biggest difference in their education. This joint memorial intends to do that and we support it.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Christie Perkins, Washington Special Education Coalition.