

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1568

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### As Reported by House Committee On: Higher Education

**Title:** An act relating to appointing student members to the boards of trustees for community colleges and the state board for community and technical colleges.

**Brief Description:** Regarding appointing members to the boards of trustees for community colleges and the state board for community and technical colleges.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Sells, Anderson, Probst, Liias, Upthegrove, Hinkle, Carlyle, Zeiger, Ormsby, Haler, Buys, Hasegawa, Stanford, Maxwell, Springer, Miloscia, Sullivan, Haigh, Hunt, Rolfes, Jacks, Dahlquist, Crouse, Kenney and Moscoso.

#### **Brief History:**

##### **Committee Activity:**

Higher Education: 2/3/11, 2/9/11 [DP].

#### **Brief Summary of Bill**

- Allows, but does not require, every community and technical college district board of trustees (board) to add a sixth position to the board, such position to be filled by a student.
- Requires expansion of the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges from nine to 10 members, one of whom must be a student.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Seaquist, Chair; Carlyle, Vice Chair; Haler, Ranking Minority Member; Buys, Crouse, Fagan, Hasegawa, Jacks, Probst and Zeiger.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Reykdal.

**Staff:** Cece Clynch (786-7195).

#### **Background:**

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*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.*

### Community and Technical College Districts.

Washington is divided into 30 community and technical college districts. Each district has a board of trustees (board) composed of five trustees appointed by the Governor. In making appointments to the boards, the Governor must give consideration to geographical diversity and representation by labor, business, women, and racial and ethnic minorities. The boards for districts containing a technical college must include at least one member from business and one member from labor. There is no requirement that the boards include a student member. Trustees serve five-year terms.

Districts in Seattle, Spokane, and Pierce counties include more than one community college. The Seattle Community College District includes North Seattle Community College, Seattle Central Community College, and South Seattle Community College. The Community Colleges of Spokane District includes Spokane Falls Community College and Spokane Community College.

### State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) consists of nine members appointed by the Governor. At least two members must reside east of the Cascade Mountains. The Governor must attempt to provide geographic balance and give consideration to representation by labor, business, women, and racial and ethnic minorities. There is no requirement that the SBCTC include a student member. Members on the SBCTC serve four-year terms.

### Four-Year Institutions.

The boards of regents and boards of trustees governing the six four-year public institutions of higher education each include a student member, as does the Higher Education Coordinating Board.

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### **Summary of Bill:**

Boards for each of Washington's community and technical college districts may, by majority vote, choose to expand the board for that district from five to six in order to seat a student member. In the event that a district's board votes to authorize this student position, the Governor selects the student member from a list of three to five candidates submitted by the associated student government, or its equivalent, of that district.

The student selected must be a student in good academic standing in that district at the time of appointment and throughout the one-year term. The student trustee should be enrolled full-time or part-time while in office, except during summer term. Should the student not be enrolled, or fail to maintain good standing, the appointment terminates and a new appointment must be made. The student member must excuse himself or herself from participation or voting on matters relating to the hiring, discipline, or tenure of faculty members and personnel.

The SBCTC is expanded from nine to 10 members, one of whom must be a student. The student member may not be counted toward the requirement that at least two members reside

east of the Cascade Mountains. The term of office for the student member is one year, beginning July 1 and ending June 30, or until the student member's successor is appointed and qualified, whichever is later.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) Before a student member was added to the Board of Trustees at Central Washington University (Board), there was a great deal of gnashing of teeth. Probably all would agree now, several years after that first student was added to the Board, that it was a good thing to add a student member. There is no reason that a student should not be a member of the community and technical college district boards. The student member, like all of the other members, will represent all citizens and not just students. It is appropriate that students not participate in personnel matters and the bill so provides. Not only will a student bring an important perspective to the board, but the student benefits as he or she becomes more informed and a better citizen. It is concerning that baby boomers and members of the "greatest generation" are making decisions for students three generations younger. It will take some time for student members to get up to speed but that is true of anyone. Legislators get up to speed very fast. Certainly, students can too. Colleges and universities are areas of hope, and students are not jaded. Those voices should be on the governing boards. This is a top priority of community and technical college students, and has been for the last several years. This will improve decision making. Students do have time to devote to this. Student members on other institution's boards have brought a valuable perspective and, in one case, led to some moneys being set aside for needy graduate students affected by the repeal of a particular tuition waiver. Kids are given the keys to cars after just 12 weeks of training. Students are certainly mature enough and should be allowed on these boards. The boards need the perspective of a student member who spends most of his or her time surrounded by other students. Many years ago, Dan Evans was opposed to students on the boards of the four-year institutions but he later changed his mind and wondered how a board could be without a student member. There are students on the State Board of Education and on the four-year institutions' boards. There should not be this gap in the middle.

(Opposed) The reality is that the boards support their students, and members are not gnashing their teeth. There is not a problem that this bill solves. Furthermore, most of the important votes taken at the district level involve faculty and tenure matters which the students would not be voting upon. Students are already involved in everything the colleges have on the table. These terms are five-year terms and most members serve two terms. A member serving just a single one-year term would not add much value. The Governor has been working on reducing boards and commissions. This would add an additional 30 members, and associated costs. Currently, trustees are community members and bring that to the table

for purposes of long-term planning. Students are not necessarily able to do that. A sunset clause would not help, because it would be difficult to come back in five years and say that students did not add anything. It is important that these be community boards made up of community citizens with no particular self-interest at stake. Students will have a self-interest at stake. If one member is added to a five-member board, there will be an even number of members which can pose the problem of a tie vote. The Governor already has the authority to appoint a student to a board if she or he wants.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support) Representative Sells, prime sponsor; Robert Stevens, The Washington State Labor Council; Ben Henry, The University of Washington; Rosellen Brittain, Bellevue Community College; and Alex Clardy, Stanley Wong, and Steve Lindstrom, Washington Student Association.

(Opposed) Peter Crane, Trustees Association, Olympic College.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.