

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SSB 5142

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As of January 26, 2012

**Title:** An act relating to alternative learning experiences.

**Brief Description:** Regarding alternative learning programs.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Stevens, Hargrove, Nelson, Shin, Pflug, Sheldon, King and Roach).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/27/11, 2/16/11 [DPS]; 1/26/12.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5142 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Harper, Vice Chair; Litzow, Ranking Minority Member; Eide, Fain, Hobbs, King, Nelson, Rockefeller and Tom.

**Staff:** Susan Mielke (786-7422)

**Background:** Alternative Learning Experiences (ALE) means a course or a set of courses developed by a certificated teacher and documented in an individual, written student learning plan. ALE programs may include significant participation and partnership by parents and families in the design and implementation of a student's learning plan. A student may enroll in an ALE program as a part-time student.

Home-based instruction programs consist of planned and supervised instructional and related educational activities provided by the parent. Students of home-based instruction are subject only to those minimum state laws and regulations which are necessary to ensure that a sufficient basic educational opportunity is provided to the students receiving such instruction.

Current law requires that when a school district provides one or more ALEs to a student, the district must provide the parents of the student, prior to enrollment, with a description of the difference between home-based instruction and the ALE program.

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

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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.*

**Summary of Bill (Proposed Second Substitute):** School districts are prohibited from advertising or marketing full-time enrollment in an ALE as being a home-based instruction program. Full-time ALE students are full-time public school students. Part-time ALE students are part-time public school students.

**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: This bill was before the committee last year although it is now a second proposed substitute because some of the changes were made in another bill that passed last session. This bill is still needed for clarity. People do not understand the difference between the public school parent-partnership ALE program and independent home schooling. Homeschooling is where parents take full responsibility for the planning, administering, and funding of their children's education apart from control or oversight by any public or private institution. The parent-partnership ALE programs are public school programs and the students are enrolled public school students whose instruction is planned by a public school teacher but the instruction may be provided by the parent and is funded by the state as a public school program. These ALE programs allow the parent to participate in the education of their children but is not true homeschooling and it creates confusion on every level. Some school districts are contributing to this confusion by advertising their ALE programs as programs to meet the needs of home schooling families and misrepresenting the home school law. We do not want to limit choice, but we want to preserve independent homeschooling for the future generations of our children.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Stevens, prime sponsor; Susan Bradrick, Christian Heritage Home Educators of WA; DiAnna Brannan, Christian Homeschool Network of WA.