

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6282

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Government Operations, Tribal Relations & Elections, January 30, 2012

Title: An act relating to the registration of international student visitor exchange programs.

Brief Description: Revising requirements for the registration of international student visitor exchange programs.

Sponsors: Senators Fraser, Benton and McAuliffe.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations, Tribal Relations & Elections: 1/26/12, 1/30/12 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, TRIBAL RELATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Pridemore, Chair; Prentice, Vice Chair; Swecker, Ranking Minority Member; Benton, Chase, Nelson and Roach.

Staff: Karen Epps (786-7424)

Background: International student exchange visitor placement organizations that place students in Washington public schools must register with the Secretary of State. Registration is not considered an endorsement by the Secretary of State or the state.

The information required in the registration form is outlined. The information includes: (1) the name, address, and telephone number of the person within the organization responsible for placement; (2) evidence that the organization meets the Washington standards; (3) the organization's unified business identification number; (4) the organization's United States Information Agency number, if any; (5) whether the organization is exempt from federal income tax; and (6) a list of the organization's placements in Washington for the previous academic year, including the number of students placed, their home countries, the school districts in which they were placed, and the length of their placements.

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 student exchange organizations must provide their exchange students, host families, and superintendent of the school district in which the student is being placed an informational document regarding services to be provided and telephone numbers for assistance.

Placing students without being registered, deliberately providing false registration information, or deliberately failing to provide students, host families, and school districts the information prescribed is a misdemeanor. A violation of the act is also a violation of the Consumer Protection Act.

The Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET) was created in December 1984. CSIET sets standards for international travel programs, evaluates travel programs, and publishes an advisory list of international educational travel and exchange programs as a service to schools and prospective international high school programs.

Summary of Bill: Student exchange organizations are encouraged to comply with appropriate federal agency regulations and nationally established standards as outlined with CSEIT. A student exchange organization must include its federal agency number, if any, on its application for registration. Additionally, student exchange organizations must also include a copy of the informational document for a student with the application for registration.

The requirement that the Secretary of State suspend a license or certificate of a person who is not in compliance with a support order or a residential or visitation order is removed. The Secretary of State may report suspected criminal activity to the appropriate local law enforcement agency, in addition to the organization involved or CSEIT.

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 program is designed to protect K-12 foreign exchange students by requiring agencies that bring these students to the United States to register with the Secretary of State's office in order to ensure that these agencies are maintaining certain standards. The program is working well, but the statutes have not been updated since its inception. This bill is an update to reflect current times. The most important addition in the bill is the part that allows the Secretary of State's office, if they get a complaint about suspected criminal activity, to report it to law enforcement.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Fraser, prime sponsor.