

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 2216

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### As Reported by House Committee On: Education

**Title:** An act relating to encouraging the inclusion of local history information in school curriculum.

**Brief Description:** Encouraging the inclusion of local history information in Washington state history and government curriculum.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Zeiger, Farrell, Johnson, Haler, Haigh, Stonier, Moscoso, Tarleton, Ryu and Bergquist.

#### **Brief History:**

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

Education: 1/20/14, 1/29/14 [DP].

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

- Encourages school districts to include information on local history in curriculum on Washington state history and government.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 16 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Stonier, Vice Chair; Dahlquist, Ranking Minority Member; Magendanz, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Haigh, Hargrove, Hawkins, Hayes, Klippert, Muri, Orwall, Parker, Pollet, Seaquist and Warnick.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives S. Hunt and Lytton.

**Staff:** Barbara McLain (786-7383).

#### **Background:**

Under high school graduation requirements established by the State Board of Education (SBE), students must complete a course in Washington state history and government. In

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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.*

2011 the SBE changed the requirement to permit districts to offer the course in either middle or high school.

Current law states that any such course must consider including information about the culture, history, and government of American Indian peoples. Study of the Washington state Constitution is also required.

The state learning standards for seventh grade Social Studies address various topics related to Washington state history and government. Otherwise, the content of the course is established by local school districts.

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**Summary of Bill:**

School districts are encouraged to include information on local history in curriculum on Washington State history and government, which may include visits to local landmarks and museums, readings on local history, and interaction with local historical societies.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**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) It is important to explicitly encourage inclusion of local history in Washington state history classes. Local communities provide a sense of place and a sense of heritage that lasts a lifetime. Children need local heroes, and they need to know the stories of how the communities they live in were created. Local museums and historic sites bring history to life. Historical societies have long offered educational programs and tours for students, but in recent years the schools have not been bringing students. They are focused on state standards, and these external opportunities have been pushed back. The opportunities still exist, and individual teachers may seek out additional information and resources on their own, but encouraging the entire district to collaborate with local historical societies will make these opportunities more visible.

Many students are bored by history. These collaborations are an attempt to make history relevant and interesting. There are resources within the local community that can be tapped. The participation of tribes in conveying their culture and history is also very important.

When someone walks into a room dressed as a mid-19th century gentleman, the others in the room pay attention and sit up in anticipation. They are curious and ready to learn. Contained within that attire is the story of change in culture and society. That is the value of teaching in

a local history museum. It opens worlds beyond a textbook or computer. Some would prefer stronger language than merely "encouraging" school districts to include local history, but this is a start. This will give teachers a reason to take a field trip. If people think about which history lesson had the most impact, they are likely to discover it was a visit to a museum. Local history is alive and should be used in schools.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Representative Zeiger, prime sponsor; Chuck Hornbuckle; Andy Anderson, Puyallup Historical Society of Meeker Manor; Terry Maves, South Hill Historical Society; Michael McGuire; Historic Fort Steilacoom Association; Mark Foutch, Olympia Historical Society and Bigelow House Museum; Bonnie Beaudoin, Pacific Lutheran University; Lane Sample, Heritage League of Pierce County and Fort Nisqually; and Mike McGuire, Fort Nisqually.

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