
HOUSE BILL 1709

State of Washington

63rd Legislature

2013 Regular Session

By Representatives Dahlquist, Santos, Magendanz, Moscoso, Fagan, Ryu, Maxwell, Pollet, and Bergquist

Read first time 02/06/13. Referred to Committee on Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to training for volunteer foreign language
2 interpreters in K-12 public schools; and creating new sections.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that:

5 (1) The number of foreign language speakers has substantially
6 increased in Washington's public schools over the last decade. The
7 office of the superintendent of public instruction reports that more
8 than eight percent of the state's total student population was enrolled
9 in the transitional bilingual instruction program as of May 2012, and
10 more than two hundred different languages are spoken in students'
11 homes.

12 (2) The office of the education ombudsman reports an increased
13 number of complaints from English language learner students and limited
14 English proficient parents regarding schools' lack of provision of
15 accurate education interpretation and the use of students as
16 interpreters for their own families.

17 (3) There are no training programs in the state specifically for
18 foreign language education interpreters. The lack of qualified
19 individuals causes public schools to use untrained bilingual adults or

1 students themselves as interpreters for parents in high-stakes
2 situations where decisions about a student's academic future are being
3 made.

4 (4) Communicating effectively with limited English proficient
5 students and families presents a challenge for Washington public
6 schools, and the inability to meet this challenge leads to inequities
7 and increased gaps in student achievement, along with increased student
8 drop-outs.

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) By February 1, 2014, the office of the
10 education ombudsman must submit to the education committees of the
11 legislature a feasibility study for development of a state foreign
12 language education interpreter training program designed to create a
13 pool of trained volunteer interpreters for public schools.

14 (2) The study must include:

15 (a) An overview of current need for and availability of foreign
16 language education interpreters in public schools, as well as current
17 practices for providing these interpreters;

18 (b) An inventory of volunteer interpreter training programs in
19 Washington and examples from other states;

20 (c) An examination of state and federal laws that apply to the
21 provision of interpretation in public schools; and

22 (d) An inventory of community resources for volunteer interpreter
23 training.

24 (3) As used in this section:

25 (a) "Interpreter" means a bilingual or multilingual individual who
26 provides oral translation for others.

27 (b) "Foreign language education interpreter" means an individual
28 who provides oral translation for limited English proficient students
29 and parents in public schools.

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