

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2532

As Reported by House Committee On: Local Government

Title: An act relating to studying public access to library services in local jurisdictions across Washington.

Brief Description: Studying public access to library services in local jurisdictions across Washington.

Sponsors: Representatives Kilduff, Muri, McCaslin, Ortiz-Self, Senn, McBride, Robinson and Bergquist.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Local Government: 1/19/16, 1/20/16 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires the Department of Commerce to conduct a study on library access in Washington and the costs of expanding library access.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Appleton, Chair; Gregerson, Vice Chair; Fitzgibbon, McBride, McCaslin and Peterson.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Taylor, Ranking Minority Member; Griffey, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Pike.

Staff: Cassie Jones (786-7303).

Background:

State law authorizes the establishment and maintenance of public libraries by counties, cities, towns, and library districts, either separately or in cooperation with one another. Library districts are separate taxing districts that fall into three categories:

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.

1. Rural county library districts provide library service to the area of a county not included within the area of incorporated cities and towns.
2. Intercounty rural library districts provide library service for all areas outside of incorporated cities and towns within two or more counties.
3. Island library districts provide service to all areas outside of incorporated cities and towns on a single island only.

Cities and towns that have not established an independent library may contract to receive library services from an existing library under certain circumstances. In addition, cities and towns with a population of 300,000 or less at the time of annexation may become part of a library district by following the statutory annexation procedure, which requires adoption of an ordinance by the legislative authority of the city or town and voter approval at a special election.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The Department of Commerce (COM) must conduct a study of library access in Washington. The study must:

- identify each local jurisdiction in Washington that does not provide free library membership to its residents, either directly or through a contract with another library or library district, and is not annexed to a library district;
- determine the number of Washingtonians who lack free membership to a public library;
- determine the cost to each local jurisdiction of expanding free membership to all residents and all residents under the age of 18;
- examine the history of Washington elections in which funding for library service was proposed to voters and describe the election results; and
- identify any private or philanthropic and existing state and federal grant programs and funding sources that could potentially support the provision of library services in small jurisdictions and low-income communities.

The study must be compiled in a written report and submitted to the Legislature and the Governor by December 1, 2016. The study must be conducted within existing resources of the COM.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The amended bill requires the Department of Commerce, as part of the study, to identify private or philanthropic funding sources in addition to state and federal funding sources that could support library services in small jurisdictions and low-income communities.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) All have heard the expression that reading is fundamental. Achieving literacy by the third grade is key to life success. If this mark is not hit, a student is four times more likely to drop out of high school. Libraries play an important role in early learning. Students should be set up for success early on in life. There are gaps in free library access across the state. Library access is critical to every child. This bill is modest; it is a study to look at where there are gaps in service and what resources can fill the gaps. Both the Department of Commerce and the Secretary of State's Office have expertise to contribute to this study. The State Library does receive federal funds that are distributed to local communities for libraries; a lot of data is collected through this process and is available for this study.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Kilduff, prime sponsor; Greg Lane, Office of the Secretary of State; and Abby Moore, Washington Library Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.