

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESSB 5267

As Passed House - Amended:
April 15, 2015

Title: An act relating to prerecorded video testimony and written testimony on pending legislation.

Brief Description: Ordering development of processes to allow prerecorded video testimony and written testimony on pending legislation.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Government Operations & Security (originally sponsored by Senators Habib, Roach, Liias, Pearson, Keiser, Mullet and Chase; by request of Secretary of State).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government: 3/24/15, 4/1/15 [DPA].

Floor Activity:

Passed House - Amended: 4/15/15, 96-2.

**Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill
(As Amended by House)**

- Allows the public to provide commentary on pending legislation through prerecorded videos and written statements to the Senate.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 7 members: Representatives S. Hunt, Chair; Bergquist, Vice Chair; Holy, Ranking Minority Member; Van Werven, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appleton, Gregory and Hawkins.

Staff: Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

Background:

The Washington State Constitution states that each house may establish its own proceedings. The House of Representatives and the Senate each adopt their own rules, and both houses

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have rules that allow for open public meetings at which the public is welcome to testify on proposed legislation. The Legislature has made available an electronic comment system as well as a toll-free hotline that the public may use to submit comments on any bill under consideration in the Legislature.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The Senate must modify the electronic comment system to allow the public to provide commentary on pending legislation through prerecorded videos and written statements to members of the Senate. The Senate may set up parameters for submission of the prerecorded videos and written statements, distribution of the materials to members of the senate, and restrictions regarding inappropriate content. The act may be known as the "Accessible Legislative Commentary Act."

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended 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) Many Washingtonians find it difficult to travel to Olympia in order to have their voices heard. Given today's technology, there should be a way to allow people to use video cameras or websites to submit input on legislation to the Legislature. The proposed amendment makes a distinction between testimony and commentary, and allows this testimony to be read into the public record.

The bill will allow citizens to engage in their government. It is difficult for many to drive several hours to provide testimony for three minutes.

The Washington Student Association supports the bill. Student lobbying organizations send students to testify on a regular basis. However, it is somewhat limited in that students' schedules do not allow them to be away in many cases because of class schedules, exams, and other activities. The bill will help facilitate students' involvement in the process.

This bill would be a very useful tool for engaging youth and participatory democracy. The bill will allow, particularly youth that have barriers, to participate in the legislative process.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Habib, prime sponsor; Kym Wyman, Secretary of State; Emily Murphy; and Paul Bell, Office of Student Legislative Affairs at Bellevue College.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.