

---

**SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 2532**

---

**State of Washington**

**64th Legislature**

**2016 Regular Session**

**By** House Local Government (originally sponsored by Representatives Kilduff, Muri, McCaslin, Ortiz-Self, Senn, McBride, Robinson, and Bergquist)

READ FIRST TIME 01/25/16.

1 AN ACT Relating to studying public access to library services in  
2 local jurisdictions across Washington; and creating new sections.

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

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** Public libraries play a unique role in  
5 American society as centers for learning and human interaction.  
6 Libraries help to educate people, support democracy by providing  
7 people with the tools to become informed citizens, and provide safe  
8 and welcoming places where people can explore and discuss ideas.

9 Furthermore, public libraries provide free, vital resources for  
10 early literacy development, including story times and parent  
11 education. Early literacy skills provide a solid foundation for  
12 academic performance by ensuring that children arrive at school ready  
13 to learn; public libraries thereby contribute positively to a child's  
14 ability to read at grade level. The legislature finds that students  
15 who do not read proficiently by third grade are four times more  
16 likely to leave high school without a diploma than proficient  
17 readers. Public libraries are therefore a critical resource in  
18 promoting early and continuing academic success for youth in the  
19 common schools.

20 The legislature intends for a study to be completed to determine  
21 how many Washingtonians lack free membership to a public library and

1 the potential fiscal impact of expanding access to all communities  
2 currently without free membership.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The department of commerce must  
4 conduct a study on library access in Washington. The study must:

5 (a) Identify each local jurisdiction in Washington that does not  
6 provide free library membership to its residents, either directly or  
7 through a contract with another library or library district, and is  
8 not annexed to a library district;

9 (b) Determine the number of Washingtonians who lack free  
10 membership to a public library;

11 (c) Determine the cost to each local jurisdiction of expanding  
12 free membership to:

13 (i) All residents; and

14 (ii) All residents under the age of eighteen;

15 (d) Examine the history of Washington elections in which funding  
16 for library service was proposed to voters and describe the election  
17 results; and

18 (e) Identify any private or philanthropic funding sources,  
19 existing state and federal grant programs and funding sources that  
20 could potentially support the provision of library services in small  
21 jurisdictions and low-income communities.

22 (2) The department of commerce must compile its findings in a  
23 written report and submit this report to the legislature and the  
24 governor by December 1, 2016.

25 (3) The department of commerce must conduct this study within  
26 existing resources.

--- END ---