
HOUSE BILL 2532

State of Washington

64th Legislature

2016 Regular Session

By Representatives Kilduff, Muri, McCaslin, Ortiz-Self, Senn, McBride, Robinson, and Bergquist

Read first time 01/14/16. Referred to Committee on Local Government.

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 existing state and federal grant programs and
19 funding sources that could potentially support the provision of
20 library services in small jurisdictions and low-income communities.

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

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

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