

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5643

As of February 1, 2022

Title: An act relating to supporting youth development.

Brief Description: Supporting youth development.

Sponsors: Senators Schoesler, Braun, Dozier, Rivers, Short, Wagoner and Wellman.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks: 2/01/22.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes that voluntary, grassroots organizations representing the social and economic interest of farm and ranch families at the local, state, and national levels may sponsor youth development programs to promote participation in agricultural fairs, youth shows, and exhibitions.
- Establishes that it is in the public interest to support youth participation in youth development programs and the Legislature will appropriate funds to fulfill the enrollment fees owed to the programs by participants.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, WATER, NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

Staff: Karen Epps (786-7424)

Background: Agricultural Fairs. Agricultural fairs are fairs or exhibitions intended to promote agriculture by including, among other things, a balanced variety of exhibits of livestock and agricultural products. Agricultural fairs are divided into four categories:

- area fairs are organized to serve an area larger than one county;
- county and district fairs are organized to serve the interests of certain single counties;
- community fairs are organized primarily to serve a smaller area than an area fair or

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- county fair; and
- youth shows and fairs serve three or more counties, educate and train rural youth, and are approved by Washington State University or the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Fair Fund. For fiscal years 2022 and 2023, the state treasurer is required to transfer \$2,750,000 from the state general fund into the Fair Fund administered by the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA). Ninety-five percent of all allocations from the fair fund must be distributed to agricultural fairs based on a merit rating system set up by the director. This merit rating must take into account certain factors, including:

- area and population served, attendance, gate receipts, and community support;
- open or youth participation and the number and type of exhibits;
- evidence of successful achievement of the aims and purposes of the fair; and
- extent of improvements made to grounds and facilities from year to year and the overall condition and appearance of grounds and facilities.

Any state allocations must be made only as a reimbursement for operating expenses incurred by the fairs. WSDA may use up to 10 percent for special assistance to any participating fair and may use the remaining 5 percent for expenses, including fair commission expenses.

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

Summary of Bill (Proposed Substitute): Voluntary, grassroots organizations representing the social and economic interest of farm and ranch families at the local, state, and national levels may sponsor youth development programs to promote participation in agricultural fairs, youth shows, and exhibitions and education in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and robotics as well as animal husbandry and agricultural education. The youth development program must incorporate civics, civil society, and participation in government into its programming.

It is in the public interest to support youth participation in youth development programs, including youth development programs under Washington State University Extension and membership in the Washington Future Farmers of America Association.

The Legislature will appropriate funds to fulfill the enrollment fees owed to the programs by participants. To receive appropriated funds after the annual enrollment period, the programs must submit a roster of enrolled youth to the county in which the program is located to receive a reimbursement of all enrollment fees. Any other fees submitted for reimbursement must be done before the end of the fiscal year.

The WSDA director may authorize expenditures from the Fair Fund, subject to the availability of appropriations for this specific purpose, for reimbursing the enrollment fees owed to the youth development programs.

Appropriation: The bill contains an appropriation totaling \$500,000 from General Fund-State to the Fair Fund.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 28, 2022.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony On Proposed Substitute: PRO: 4-H participation is a fraction of what it was ten years ago. Young people are being charged to join 4-H, which seems contrary to increasing participation and this bill will address that issue. This bill will also provide flexibility for other youth development programs and will benefit kids. It is important to continue to support youth development outside of the classroom. Fairs are Washington's largest classroom and they are the beneficiaries of these youth programs through showmanship and displays at fairs. This bill will help ensure the continuation of learning outside the classroom for youth. The experiences and opportunities that youth have in Future Farmers of America (FFA) are life-changing and give youth the opportunity to experience many aspects of agriculture. Youth learn how to speak in front of large groups and gain a confidence to be their true self. Youth will be more interested in participating in FFA if there are no costs to the participant and it allows youth to be involved in something outside of school without any financial strain. Students should be able to participate no matter what their socio-economic status is and no matter whether they come from a rural community or an urban community.

OTHER: There is a need for a holistic view of youth development and this could be part of a broader conversation in the future. These programs impact kids every single day.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Alyxandra Bozeman-State Officer; Andrea Thayer, WA State Fairs Association.

OTHER: David Beard, School's Out Washington.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.