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**SENATE BILL 5608**

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**State of Washington 69th Legislature 2025 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Warnick, Hasegawa, and Holy

AN ACT Relating to adopting free speech policy statements at public institutions of higher education; adding a new section to chapter 28B.10 RCW; and creating a new section.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature finds that freedom of expression principles are required for a free society. Recently, controversial speech has been met, not with competing ideas, but with attempts to silence the speakers. The legislature agrees with Justice Brandeis that "the remedy to be applied is more speech, not enforced silence," and with Justice Kennedy that "the remedy for speech that is false is speech that is true." The legislature further finds that the greatest breeding ground for the principles of freedom of expression are our institutions of higher education. Therefore, in order to promote and protect principles of freedom of expression, the legislature intends to require its institutions of higher education to adopt the Chicago principles as presented by the University of Chicago's committee on freedom of expression.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28B.10 RCW to read as follows:

The boards of regents of the state universities, the boards of trustees of the regional universities, The Evergreen State College, and the boards of trustees of each community and technical college district, in collaboration with faculty and students, shall each adopt a free speech policy statement. This free speech policy statement must articulate certain principles that the institution will uphold, comparable to the Chicago principles or Chicago statement. The statement must include, at a minimum, a commitment to:

(1) Promote and protect free and open inquiry;

(2) Promote and protect a completely free and open discussion of ideas that maintains a climate of mutual respect;

(3) Promote and protect the principle of debate or deliberation without judgment by the institution; and

(4) Act in conformity with the principle of free expression and not obstruct or otherwise interfere with the freedom of others to express views they reject.

**--- END ---**