

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5075

As Reported By House Committee On:
Higher Education

Title: An act relating to hazing at state and independent institutions of higher education.

Brief Description: Prohibiting hazing at institutions of higher education.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Senators Winsley, Fraser and Erwin).

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Higher Education, March 30, 1993, DPA.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 16 members: Representatives Jacobsen, Chair; Quall, Vice Chair; Brumsickle, Ranking Minority Member; Sheahan, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bray; Carlson; Casada; Finkbeiner; Kessler; J. Kohl; Mielke; Ogden; Orr; Rayburn; Shin; and Wood.

Staff: Marilee Scarbrough (786-7196).

Background: Twenty-eight states have laws prohibiting hazing and providing penalties. Washington State does not have a law against hazing. However, several Washington State institutions of higher education have adopted rules or policies prohibiting hazing.

Summary of Amended Bill: Hazing is defined as a method of initiation into a student organization or living group that causes, or is likely to cause, bodily danger or physical harm, or serious mental or emotional harm, to any student or other person attending a public or private institution of higher education. Customary athletic events or other similar contests or competitions are excluded from the definition.

No student or other person in attendance at any public or private institution of higher education may engage, or conspire to engage in hazing. Violating the provisions against hazing is a misdemeanor.

Any student who participates in hazing will forfeit any entitlement to state funded grants, scholarships and awards. Any organization or living group that knowingly permits hazing to be conducted by those subject to its control will be deprived of any sanction, official recognition, or approval granted by a public institution of higher education. Institutions of higher education are directed to draft rules for offenses not covered by the act.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: A civil penalty is added for an organization that knowingly allows hazing. The amendment clarifies that a student who participates in the hazing of another will lose all state-funded grants, scholarships, and awards. The amendatory language instructs institutions to draft rules for offenses not covered by the act.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Hazing is a serious problem. Hazing involves many dangerous pranks that endanger student's lives. Many serious injuries and deaths have occurred because of hazing. Many incidents of hazing involve alcohol consumption.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Senator Shirley Winsley, prime sponsor; and Larry Ganders, Washington State University.