

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5715

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As of February 23, 2009

**Title:** An act relating to residential educational programs for juveniles found to be gang members.

**Brief Description:** Regarding residential educational programs for juveniles found to be gang members.

**Sponsors:** Senators Honeyford, King and Shin.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/16/09.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

**Staff:** Brandon Roché (786-7405)

**Background:** The 2007 Legislature directed the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to convene a task force to examine how gangs are affecting school safety. One of the recommendations of this task force is to develop a dedicated apportionment for schools to provide transition programs. Some school districts have said that these programs are only effective if they can be operated year-round.

In 2008 a new definition was added to the criminal code defining a "Criminal street gang associate or member" as any person who actively participates in any criminal street gang and who intentionally promotes, furthers, or assists in any criminal act by the criminal street gang.

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

**Summary of Bill (Proposed Substitute):** Educational programs serving juveniles found to be criminal street gang associates or members are to be funded for 220 school days per year. These funds are to be allocated out of the institutional education program monies allocated by the OSPI.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: I have several newspaper articles relating to problems with gangs in our communities. This would keep gang members in class during the summer months. We have a serious gang problem in our community. It's our attempt through the CHOICES program to combat this problem. But we've found that basic education funding only provides 180 days of funding and we're going to lose ground in the fight against gangs if we can't keep the program operating in the summer months. The missing piece is the summer component; more of the students could be successful if we could offer this.

CON: The high school should be able to provide services to these students. We need a better way of dealing with this problem than to separate and single out these troubled youths. These types of programs begin the process of institutionalizing these youths. I also have concerns with how this would be funded.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Honeyford, prime sponsor; John Hughes, Dave Martinez, Sunnyside School District.

CON: Jason Lewis, Bethlehem Baptist Church.