
SECOND SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5136

State of Washington

62nd Legislature

2011 Regular Session

By Senate Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Kastama, Tom, Hobbs, Chase, Rockefeller, Haugen, McAuliffe, Shin, Hargrove, Harper, Hatfield, Zarelli, and Litzow)

READ FIRST TIME 02/25/11.

1 AN ACT Relating to establishing the first Washington nonprofit
2 online university; adding a new section to chapter 28B.76 RCW; and
3 creating a new section.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that the key to
6 Washington's economic prosperity over the past twenty years has been a
7 thriving employment sector for workers who have high levels of
8 education. The legislature finds that by 2018, sixty-seven percent of
9 all jobs in Washington will require some postsecondary education - the
10 fifth highest in the nation - and that between 2011 and 2018, the
11 number of Washington jobs requiring postsecondary education will
12 increase by two hundred fifty-nine thousand. The legislature finds
13 that while Washington enterprises that rely on highly educated workers
14 have been able to fill positions from within the state and by
15 attracting workers from other states or nations, businesses located in
16 states that fail to produce sufficient numbers of degreed workers will
17 be at a competitive disadvantage, since these employers will incur the
18 added expense of recruiting heavily in other states and countries to
19 find their skilled workforce. Citizens of Washington will not have

1 access to the jobs Washington firms are producing unless the state
2 dramatically increases postsecondary educational opportunities for
3 them. The legislature further finds that increasing the numbers of
4 Washington graduates to meet the needs of the state's citizens and
5 businesses demands innovative institutions and educational delivery
6 systems.

7 The legislature intends to partner with Western Governors
8 University, a regionally and nationally accredited nonprofit and
9 independent university, to establish Western Governors University -
10 Washington. Western Governors University would offer online,
11 competency-based degrees and provide enhanced access to postsecondary
12 education for all Washington students, including dislocated workers and
13 placebound students. The legislature further intends that the
14 institution be recognized as a Washington baccalaureate degree-granting
15 institution that is self-supporting and does not receive state funding.
16 It is the intent of the legislature that the higher education
17 coordinating board, the state board for community and technical
18 colleges, and the other institutions of higher education in Washington
19 include the institution in policies and agreements regarding the
20 efficient transfer of credits and courses between institutions.

21 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.76 RCW
22 to read as follows:

23 (1) The board may:

24 (a) Recognize and endorse online, competency-based education as an
25 important component of Washington's higher education system;

26 (b) Work to eliminate unnecessary barriers to the delivery of
27 online competency-based education by Western Governors University -
28 Washington; and

29 (c) Work with Western Governors University - Washington, as
30 appropriate, to integrate its academic programs and services into
31 Washington higher education policy and strategy.

32 (2) The board shall work with Western Governors University -
33 Washington to create data-sharing processes to assess the institution's
34 performance and determine the extent to which it helps the state
35 achieve the goals of the current statewide strategic master plan for
36 higher education.

1 (3) The board shall adopt rules and policies to implement this
2 section and that require board consultation and approval before:

3 (a) Modifications of contractual terms or relationships between the
4 state and the institution of higher education; or

5 (b) Changes or modifications in the nonprofit status of the
6 institution of higher education.

7 (4) The board shall obtain legislative approval before allowing the
8 use of state need grant dollars at Western Governors University -
9 Washington.

--- END ---