

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 6177

As Passed House:
February 29, 1996

Title: An act relating to student consumer protection.

Brief Description: Changing provisions for degree granting institutions.

Sponsors: Senators Bauer and Kohl; by request of Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 2/16/96 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/29/96, 95-0.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Carlson, Chairman; Mulliken, Vice Chairman; Jacobsen, Ranking Minority Member; Mason, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Blanton; Delvin and Goldsmith.

Staff: Suzi Morrissey (786-7120).

Background: All degree-granting institutions must have authorization from the Higher Education Coordinating Board to operate and to grant degrees. By law, certain institutions are exempt from this requirement. Exemptions are provided to state-supported institutions, religious institutions offering only religious degrees, and institutions offering non-credit-bearing workshops lasting three or fewer days. The board also exempts from regulation institutions of higher education that are accredited by an accrediting association recognized by the board. During 1995, with the guidance of the Attorney General, the board established exemption criteria in addition to the accrediting association recognition. However, the Attorney General ruled that the additional criteria are not valid without a change in statute.

Summary of Bill: The Higher Education Coordinating Board may adopt criteria for exempting certain degree granting institutions of higher education from state regulation. Institutions seeking exemptions because they are accredited by an

accrediting association recognized by the board may also be required to meet additional criteria established by the board.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: The Higher Education Coordinating Board is required by law to regulate independent colleges and universities. A number of the state's largest independent universities and colleges are exempt from regulation because they are accredited by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges. The board wanted to adopt an additional requirement to ensure that exempt institutions are financially solvent. However, the Attorney General advised the board that a statutory change was necessary to adopt that requirement.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Susan Patrick, Higher Education Coordinating Board (pro); and Linda Broderick, Washington Federation of Private Career Schools and Colleges (pro).