

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1135

As Passed House:

March 14, 1995

Title: An act relating to acquisition of public art.

Brief Description: Exempting incarceration and school district facilities from public art requirements.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Capital Budget (originally sponsored by Representatives McMorris, Morris, Pennington, Benton, Koster, Smith, Sheldon, Chandler, Mulliken, Foreman, L. Thomas, Schoesler, Sheahan, Honeyford, Fuhrman, Lambert, Blanton, Van Luven, Boldt, Buck, Crouse, Huff, Hickel, Thompson, Robertson, McMahan, Stevens, Sherstad, Cooke, Johnson, Delvin and Mielke).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Capital Budget: 2/23/95, 3/6/95. [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/14/95, 60-38.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CAPITAL BUDGET

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Sehlin, Chairman; Honeyford, Vice Chairman; Hankins; McMorris; Mitchell; Pennington; Silver and L. Thomas.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Ogden, Ranking Minority Member; Chopp, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Costa; Regala and Valle.

Staff: Bill Robinson (786-7140).

Background: The 21-member Washington State Arts Commission was established by the Legislature in 1961, with the goal of supporting the growth, development, and preservation of the arts. The Visual Arts program was added to the duties of the Washington State Arts Commission by the Legislature in 1974, to place art in state-owned buildings. The program is funded from the state construction budget by requiring one half of 1 percent of all new state construction projects be allocated to the Visual Arts program. The Arts Commission uses the percent for art allocation to purchase artwork for placement at the project site.

The money may also be used to fund portable art collections that rotate among public buildings.

All new construction for state agencies, colleges and universities and public schools must allocate money to the Visual Arts program. Once the artwork is acquired, it becomes part of the State Art Collection under the ownership of the Washington State Arts Commission. Currently there are over 2,900 art works in the State Art Collection located statewide. The acquisition cost of this collection is over eight million dollars.

Summary of Bill: State correctional and juvenile rehabilitation facilities and school construction are exempted from the requirement that one half of 1 percent of new construction be set aside for art. Art acquired by the commission must be created by a Washington State artist.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: It is time to question the role of state government in funding art projects. The state is funding artwork on public buildings during a time when it does not have sufficient money to pay for school construction projects that have already been approved by local voters. The state should not mandate public funds be set aside for artwork, but rather it should encourage private donations and community efforts to support art programs. This state mandate has resulted in a frustrating artwork selection process that takes away the ability of local citizens to select artwork and artists that represent their local community.

Testimony Against: The presence of professional artwork in school buildings encourages students and the public to be more aware of the wide variety of art and artists and thus encourages creativity and expression. Artwork in prisons softens the negative impact of the hard physical environment while at the same time providing rehabilitative benefits to prison inmates and improved working conditions for correctional staff. Several of the art works purchased by prison construction funds have been used as traveling exhibits that are displayed in schools and some have been located in community settings.

Testified: Representative Cathy McMorris (pro); Karen Gose and Bruce Orchid, Washington State Arts Commission; Richard Andrews, Henry Art Gallery; Georgia Cutberth and Tracy Molson, River Ridge High School; Deborah Greenwood, Tacoma Arts Council; Andrea Bynum, Dept of Corrections; and Carson Boysen (all con).