

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1763

As Reported By House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to school district public surveys.

Brief Description: Allowing school boards to distribute public surveys for limited purposes.

Sponsors: Representatives Brumsickle and Basich.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/17/95, 2/24/95 [DPS].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 16 members: Representatives Brumsickle, Chairman; Elliot, Vice Chairman; Johnson, Vice Chairman; Cole, Ranking Minority Member; Poulsen, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Clements; Dickerson; G. Fisher; Hatfield; McMahan; Quall; Radcliff; Talcott; B. Thomas; Thompson and Veloria.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Smith.

Staff: Robert Butts (786-7111).

Background: Current law allows school boards to expend funds for the purpose of preparing and distributing information to the general public regarding the district's instructional program and the operation and maintenance of district schools. However, current law makes it clear that this information may not be used for the purpose of influencing the outcome of a school district election.

School districts have sponsored community surveys in which they attempt to determine whether or not a specific levy or bond is acceptable, and whether it should be placed on the ballot. School districts officials have been informed by the Public Disclosure Commission that they cannot ask such questions if the questions appear to be designed to influence the outcome of a future election.

Summary of Substitute Bill: School districts are authorized to expend funds for the purpose of determining public concerns and opinions regarding the district's instructional program, and for the purpose of providing information for the board to assist its decisions regarding holding elections on particular funding measures.

School districts are required to release information to individuals, upon request, regarding the opinion surveys.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: A provision was added that requires school districts to release information about the surveys to individuals who request it.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

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

Testimony For: Current law, according to the Public Disclosure Commission office, does not give school districts the authority to survey the public regarding whether or not districts should conduct levy and bond elections, and what should be included in these measures.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Dwayne Slate, Washington State School Directors' Association.