

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2285

As Passed House:

February 5, 1996

Title: An act relating to student consumer protection.

Brief Description: Changing provisions for degree granting institutions.

Sponsors: Representatives Mastin and Carlson; by request of Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 1/23/96, 1/25/96 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/5/96, 96-0.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Carlson, Chairman; Mulliken, Vice Chairman; Jacobsen, Ranking Minority Member; Mason, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Basich; Benton; Blanton; Delvin; Goldsmith; Mastin; Scheuerman and Sheahan.

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. Over time exemptions have been allowed for such things as branch campuses, long-time established independent institutions in Washington, and institutions accredited by an accrediting association recognized by the board. With the guidance of the Attorney General, the board established a number of 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 additional criteria and is not required to grant a waiver from the degree-granting process based solely on its recognition by an accrediting association.

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).