

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5983

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Education, February 28, 1995

Title: An act relating to qualifications of teachers.

Brief Description: Acknowledging the diversity of literature for purposes of rules establishing subject area requirements for instruction in English.

Sponsors: Senators Pelz and Franklin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Education: 2/28/95 [DPS, DNP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5983 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Pelz, Vice Chair; Finkbeiner, Gaspard and Rasmussen.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Hochstatter and Johnson.

Staff: Leslie Goldstein (786-7424)

Background: Current State Board of Education rules require a person, who is seeking a subject area endorsement to teach English, to have completed coursework in American literature, English literature, comparative literature, linguistics or structure of language, and writing/composition.

Summary of Substitute Bill: When the State Board of Education adopts rules establishing the criteria for a person to teach English, the rules must require coursework in American literature but cannot require coursework in the literature of any other specific country.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Persons seeking endorsements to teach English must have coursework in American literature.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: The literature of Great Britain should not be emphasized more than the literature of other countries. The State Board promised to change this rule in 1993 and has not changed the rule.

Testimony Against: The State Board rules are not as restrictive as they appear, since a college or university can determine what course content meets the requirements for an endorsement in English. The current standards are based upon the recommendations of a collaborative group of teachers and college professors. The endorsement criteria needs to be aligned with the work of the Commission on Student Learning and changes as the commission completes its work. Statutory and regulatory flexibility should be maintained.

Testified: Senator Pelz, prime sponsor; Larry Davis, SBE (con).