

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 6535

As Passed Senate, February 12, 1996

Title: An act relating to international educational, cultural, and business exchanges.

Brief Description: Promoting international educational, cultural, and business exchanges.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Labor, Commerce & Trade (originally sponsored by Senators Fraser, Pelz, Deccio, Hale, Rasmussen, McDonald, Prince, McAuliffe, Winsley and Kohl).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor, Commerce & Trade: 1/22/96, 1/29/96 [DPS].
Passed Senate, 2/12/96, 47-2.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE & TRADE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6535 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Pelz, Chair; Heavey, Vice Chair; A. Anderson, Deccio, Franklin, Fraser and McDonald.

Staff: Patrick Woods (786-7430)

Background: In 1990, a study by the House Subcommittee on International Education found that three out of every five university graduates in the state will work in an area directly related to trade. The subcommittee also found that international activities and programs are increasingly important to the academic mission of educators.

In order to address these findings, the Legislature in 1993 established the Task Force on International Education and Cultural Exchanges, and authorized it to make recommendations on a broad array of issues pertaining to international trade and cultural exchange policies and programs.

The Task Force, in its 1994 report to the Legislature, recommended an array of policies and programs to provide international trade and encourage cross-cultural awareness.

Summary of Bill: The Legislature recognizes the importance of international exchange programs and sister relationships in promoting international trade and encouraging cultural awareness.

Cultural Exchange Council: The council is established within the Secretary of State's office in order to assist the Governor and the Legislature, along with individuals and organizations at a state and local level, to develop cultural exchanges with other countries. The council is comprised of state and local officials and members of the business, educational, and trading communities. It is authorized to: promote cultural exchanges; maintain a data base on cultural exchange opportunities and individuals that have participated in these programs;

and monitor the implementation of the recommendations from the legislative Task Force on International Education and Cultural Exchange. The council is authorized to establish a nonprofit corporation and may also accept gifts and expend funds.

International Trading Partners Program: The Secretary of State may develop a pilot project to furnish trading partners with technical assistance, training, and expertise through the voluntary services provided by Washington residents. The program volunteers are not employees or officials of the state. Funding for the project may be provided from federal, state or private funds.

International Contact Data Base: The Secretary of State is directed to develop and maintain an international contact data base. The data base listings include: (a) Washington students and citizens working and studying abroad; (b) international students who have studied in Washington; (c) international exchange opportunities for Washington residents; and (d) international business and government contacts, with an emphasis on key trading partners. Executive branch agencies along with educational institutions are directed to assist in developing the data base. Individuals may request that they be removed from any listings and personal information is exempt from the public records statute. The Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development, in consultation with other state agencies, is directed to identify up to 15 countries that are of strategic importance to development of Washington's international trade relations.

International Student Exchange and Internship Program: The Higher Education Coordinating Board is directed to administer the Student Exchange and Internship Program. The board in carrying out its duties is required to convene an advisory committee, review and select students to participate in the program and adopt the necessary policies and practices to effectively administer the project. A fund is established in the State Treasurer's office titled the Washington International Exchange Trust Fund.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 19, 1996.

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

Testimony For: The bill will assist Washington in promoting cultural exchanges and enhance international trade.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Ralph Munro, Secretary of State; Bill Asbury, Ex-Chief of Protocol; Burton Bard, American Cultural Exchange; Richard Klein, CTED; Frank Brouillet, retired, Educ. Inst.; Pat Jones, WA Public Ports Assn.