

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESSCR 8422

As Reported By House Committee On:
State Government

Brief Description: Creating a committee to improve tribal relations.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Judiciary (originally sponsored by Senators T. Sheldon, Swecker, Fraser, Oke, Kohl-Welles, B. Sheldon, Snyder, Spanel, Heavey, Thibaudeau, Rossi, Prentice, Hale, Fairley, Morton, McAuliffe, Gardner, Rasmussen, Jacobsen, Haugen, Eide, Kline, Patterson, Franklin, Winsley and Costa).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government: 2/18/00, 2/25/00 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill
(As Amended by House Committee)

- Creates the Joint Select Committee on Legislative/Tribal Relations.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 8 members: Representatives McMorris, Republican Co-Chair; Romero, Democratic Co-Chair; Campbell, Republican Vice Chair; Miloscia, Democratic Vice Chair; Dunshee; Haigh; Lambert and D. Schmidt.

Staff: Jim Morishima (786-7191).

Background:

There are 28 federally recognized Native American tribes located within Washington, with a combined population of approximately 91,000 people. Native American tribes are sovereigns and are governed by a variety of legal authorities including the tribes' own sovereignty, treaty, and federal law.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The Joint Select Committee on Legislative/Tribal Relations is created. The committee must review, study, and recommend how the Legislature and tribes may develop more effective relationships and arrange for intergovernmental mechanisms in order to be able to work together on common interests and problems, such as court jurisdiction, human services, gaming, tax and revenue, historic preservation, and environmental issues. The committee must also study of how other state legislatures and tribal governments handle their intergovernmental relationships.

The committee must consist of 14 members, four members from the Senate, four members from the House, and six members from the tribes. One tribal member must be from eastern Washington, one must be from the Pacific coast region, and two must be from the Puget Sound region. Two tribal members must represent tribes that are not members of the Association of Washington Tribes. The Governor may appoint an ad hoc member to represent the executive branch.

The committee must submit its report to the Legislature no later than December 1, 2000. The committee terminates on December 15, 2000.

Amended Bill Compared to Engrossed Substitute Bill: The number of tribal members is increased from four to six. Four of the tribal members must be from various regions of the state. Two of the members must represent tribes that are not members of the Association of Washington Tribes.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: The state and the tribes have a checkered history. When the tribes and the state have moved forward together, positive results have been achieved. This committee will help improve communications and relations between the state and the tribes. It will also help protect state resources. The focus of the committee is on intergovernmental mechanisms; if processes and procedures are in place, issues can be plugged into the process and resolved. This measure also promotes cross-education. The measure has the support of the majority of the tribes in Washington.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Sheldon, prime sponsor; Brian Cladoosby, Swinomish Tribe, President, Association of Washington Tribes; Gene Joseph, Colville Tribes; John McCoy, Tulalip Tribes; Steve Robinson, NW Indian Fisheries Commission; Alan

Parker, NW Indian Research Group, faculty, the Evergreen State College; and Randy Scott, Quinault Nation.