

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5396

As of February 2, 2007

Title: An act relating to grants for school districts recruiting mathematics and special education teachers on college campuses.

Brief Description: Providing grants to recruit mathematics and special education teachers.

Sponsors: Senators Clements, McAuliffe, Oemig, Hobbs, Rasmussen, Kauffman, Eide, Hewitt, Zarelli, Brandland, Rockefeller and Roach.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/01/07.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Kimberly Cushing (786-7421)

Background: According to the 2004 Educator Supply and Demand in Washington State Report, teacher shortages exist in both special education and mathematics.

Currently in Washington, two programs exist to recruit teachers. The Future Teachers Conditional Scholarship and Loan Repayment Program is designed to encourage outstanding students and paraprofessionals to become teachers. Priority is given to individuals seeking certification or an additional endorsement in math, science, technology, or special education. There are two ways for selected participants to receive the benefits of this program: through a conditional scholarship or through repayments against federal student loans. After completing their educational program, recipients are obligated to a specific length of teaching service in a Washington public K-12 school in exchange for the benefit.

The Alternative Routes to Teacher Certification Program prepares non-teaching professionals, such as engineers or computer scientists, for effective classroom teaching. High-quality alternative route programs can help school districts fill statewide subject matter shortages, such as special education and math, and areas with shortages due to geographic location. School districts, or districts in cooperation with educational service districts, operate partnerships with higher education teacher preparation programs to provide this performance-based alternative route to recruiting teaching candidates.

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

Summary of Proposed Substitute As Heard in Committee (Early Learning & K-12 Education): The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) must establish a grant program to

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provide funds for school districts, enabling them to visit college campuses to recruit students to become math and special education teachers. The recruits may be used to help school districts meet the need for additional math teachers and to address student deficiencies in any content area of the Washington Assessment of Student Learning. The Washington Association of School Administrators must develop the criteria for eligible districts.

School districts who receive the grants can determine how to apply the funds; the money may be spent on sign-up bonuses, tuition payments, and recruiting students anywhere in the United States. However, districts cannot direct the money at teacher preparation departments or programs.

SPI must report and make recommendations on the program to the Legislature by December 1, 2009. The grant program expires December 31, 2009.

The sum of \$1 million (\$500,000 in each fiscal year 2008 and fiscal year 2009) is appropriated to SPI to support the program.

Appropriation: \$1,000,000.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Substitute Bill: PRO: School districts are struggling to attract math and special education teachers, and this bill creates a recruiting program that affords school districts the flexibility to address their deficiencies. This money would be for attracting people who are not in a teacher's program; money will not be taken away from other programs. This grant program does two things: it opens a path for students who don't know how to get into teaching, and it lets districts know about college students who may be interested in teaching.

CON: Other programs already exist to recruit teachers. It is not clear whether the money would provide more teachers. Instead, money needs to be spent on a statewide recruitment strategy.

OTHER: There are competing interests in college, and once a college student decides to major in math many job options are presented. Thus, students need to be approached in their freshman year of college before their coursework is laid out. Some school districts have offered recruiting bonuses to teachers but have struggled to retain these teachers.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Clements, prime sponsor; Tom Robinson, high school teacher.

CON: Nasue Nishidu, Professional Educators Standards Board.

OTHER: Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association.