

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1477

As Passed House:
February 28, 2011

Title: An act relating to the authority to offer educational specialist degrees.

Brief Description: Authorizing the board of trustees at Eastern Washington University to offer educational specialist degrees.

Sponsors: Representatives Schmick, Sells, Springer, Haler, Roberts and Kenney.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 2/3/11, 2/9/11 [DP];

Education Appropriations & Oversight: 2/17/11, 2/18/11 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/28/11, 96-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes the Board of Trustees of Eastern Washington University to offer educational specialist degrees, subject to review and approval by the Higher Education Coordinating Board.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Seaquist, Chair; Carlyle, Vice Chair; Haler, Ranking Minority Member; Buys, Crouse, Fagan, Hasegawa, Jacks, Probst, Reykdal and Zeiger.

Staff: Cece Clynch (786-7195).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS & OVERSIGHT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 18 members: Representatives Haigh, Chair; Probst, Vice Chair; Anderson, Ranking Minority Member; Dammeier, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Dahlquist, Fagan, Frockt, Hargrove, Hope, Maxwell, Nealey, Orwall, Rolfes, Santos, Seaquist, Sells, Short and Stanford.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Staff: Trista Zugel (786-7157).

Background:

One of the primary purposes of regional universities is to offer undergraduate and graduate education programs through the master's degree. The regional universities are specifically authorized by the Legislature to grant any degree through the master's degree to any student who has completed a program of study in those areas which are determined by the faculty and the board of trustees of the institution to be appropriate for the granting of such degree. This legislative authorization is the first step. Before being offered, all degree programs are also subject to the review and approval of the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB).

In 2001 the Legislature authorized Eastern Washington University (EWU) to offer applied, but not research, doctorate level degrees in physical therapy, subject to review and approval by the HECB. This is the only graduate degree above a master's that a regional university has been authorized to offer.

An educational specialist degree (ED.S.) is an advanced degree for people who already have a master's degree with a teaching or educational focus. It is an intermediate degree between a master's and a doctorate. Some common ED.S. specialties include school psychology, curriculum and instruction, special education, and educational administration.

Summary of Bill:

The Board of Trustees of the EWU is authorized to offer an ED.S. degree, subject to review and approval by the HECB.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Higher Education):

(In support) A statutory change is required to allow the EWU to offer this ED.S. degree since it is a degree above a master's level. The EWU will still have to go through the HECB review and approval process before this degree can be offered. An ED.S. degree is really the standard for school psychologists. It is a three-year degree, between a master's and a doctorate. Other states such as Oregon, Idaho, and Montana have schools which offer this degree. Job applicants with master's degrees must compete with those who have the ED.S. degree. While those getting a master's degree at the EWU may have 90 credits or more, they can only get a master's degree while students in similar programs in other states get a higher degree. This higher degree offers greater opportunity in terms of career choices and higher salaries. School psychology is a high-demand field in Washington. The EWU wants to attract the best candidates.

(Opposed) None.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Education Appropriations & Oversight):

(In support) We are delighted that the EWU is taking up the cause of providing these needed degrees in Washington. This bill has no fiscal impact.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying (Higher Education): Representative Schmick, prime sponsor; David Buri, Ron Dalla, Susan Ruby, and Layne Brower, Eastern Washington University.

Persons Testifying (Education Appropriations & Oversight): David Buri, Eastern Washington University; and Chris Mulik, Washington State University.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Higher Education): None.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Education Appropriations & Oversight): None.