

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 2291

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Labor, Commerce & Trade, February 22, 1996

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

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

Sponsors: Representatives Van Luven, Veloria, Brumsickle, Jacobsen, Radcliff, Hatfield, Mason and Thompson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor, Commerce & Trade: 2/22/96 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE & TRADE

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Pelz, Chair; Heavey, Vice Chair; Deccio, Franklin, Fraser, Newhouse and Wojahn.

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 Amended 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 authorized to develop and maintain an international contact data base. The data base listings may 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 authorized to administer the Student Exchange and Internship Program. The board in carrying out its duties may 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.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: The responsibilities of the Secretary of State's office and those of the Higher Education Coordinating Board are authorized instead of mandated by the Legislature.

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 promote international cultural exchanges between Washington citizens and those of other countries. Encouraging these types of exchanges is extremely important to promoting international trade and positioning Washington companies in the international marketplace.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Ralph Munro, Secretary of State (pro); William F. Asbury (pro).