

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5109

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Higher Education, February 20, 1995

Title: An act relating to reviewing programs at institutions of higher education scheduled for closure.

Brief Description: Requiring the higher education coordinating board to review certain programs slated for closure by an institution of higher education.

Sponsors: Senator Quigley.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 1/26/95, 2/20/95 [DPS, DNP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5109 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Bauer, Chair; Kohl, Vice Chair; Drew, McAuliffe and Sheldon.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators A. Anderson, Prince and Wood.

Staff: Jean Six (786-7423)

Background: Recently, the public institutions of higher education in the state of Washington have implemented a number of across-the board budget cuts. In addition, the Legislature told these institutions to plan for 2.4 percent budget reductions for 1995-97. It is believed by some institutional governing boards that the strength of the institutions can best be maintained by leaving some programs untouched and reorganizing or eliminating others. Each program proposed for elimination will undergo internal reviews by faculty and student committees.

Summary of Substitute Bill: In addition to its current program responsibilities, the Higher Education Coordinating Board is authorized to review, evaluate, and approve or deny an institutional decision to close a program, if the program slated for elimination is the only program of its kind available at a public or private institution of higher education in the state. The HECB review occurs prior to action by the governing board of a four-year institution.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The HECB review occurs early in the institution's procedures for elimination of an academic program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 13, 1995.

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

Testimony For: The goal is to protect unique programs. The HECB should review programs of statewide significance that are offered in only one institution. Outside review of the UW process is necessary. The closure of the Slavic language program is shortsighted. It is ranked seventh in the nation. The closure will have a significant negative impact on the business community and the economic health of Washington.

Testimony Against: The university needs flexibility to set priorities and to manage in a difficult budget climate. No cuts have yet been made; though the review process is underway. We must cut \$12 million by July 1, 1995. The HECB should not be allowed to veto a decision by the institution's governing board.

Testified: PRO: Senator Kevin Quigley; Karl Kramer; Mikah Hall, UW graduate student; Daniel Waugh, Chairman of the Russian, East European and Central Asian Studies Program, UW; Gayla Diment, Assoc. Prof., UW; Susan Patrick, Gov't Relations, HECB; Clayton, UW senior; Kirstin Shore, student, UW; Mark Foss, student, UW; Mark Sewell, student, UW; CON: David Thorud, Provost, UW.