

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5605

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Higher Education, February 28, 1995

Title: An act relating to prohibiting alcohol and drug use in state-owned college or university residences.

Brief Description: Prohibiting drug and alcohol use in state-owned college and university residences.

Sponsors: Senators Owen, Bauer, Sheldon, Wood, McAuliffe, Prince, Heavey, Drew, Winsley, Palmer, Deccio, Oke, Prentice and Schow.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 2/9/95, 2/28/95 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5605 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Bauer, Chair; Kohl, Vice Chair; Drew, Prince, Sheldon, West and Wood.

Staff: Jean Six (786-7423)

Background: In December 1994, researchers from the Harvard School of Public Health published a report in the Journal of the American Medical Association documenting the prevalence of undergraduate drinking, and the effect that drinkers have on other students.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Alcohol and drug use are prohibited in state-owned college or university housing where a predominant number of residents are minors, even for those residents who are twenty-one years of age or older. The prohibition is a part of the rental agreement signed by students or their parents or guardians.

In addition to other penalties provided by law, for the first violation, a student cited by a law officer or college or university housing official is warned and referred to the student council. As the consequence of a second violation, the student is expelled.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Prohibition applies only in student housing where a predominant number of residents are minors.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 30, 1995

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

Testimony For: Attending college is expensive and the state is responsible to provide a quality learning environment including a safe living space for students. Dormitories are part of the learning environment. We can no longer tolerate a "boys will be boys" attitude. Students who choose to be non-drinkers deserve an alcohol free living environment. Ninety percent of students living in dormitories are under 21 years of age. Research demonstrates that the only effective policy requires a dry campus. Alcohol is behind 90 percent of the rapes and violence on campus. We need to protect non-abusers from the abusers. Currently, alcohol policies do exist on Washington campuses; however, denial is rampant.

Testimony Against: The comprehensive plans required by earlier legislation have been instrumental in expanding the education programs on our campuses. Substance abuse is taken very seriously; counseling and rehabilitative services are provided. The bill conflicts with privacy laws. The legislation is too broad and attempts to find the nonexistent easy answer. Prohibition will drive activity off-campus. While we support the concept, we cannot support an unenforceable measure.

Testified: Senator Brad Owen (pro); Dan Nicklaus, CWU student (con); George Durrie, Director of Gov't. Relations, EWU (con); Sherry Burkey, Gov't. Relations, UW (con); Larry Ganders, Gov't. Relations, WSU (con).