

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6487

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Education, February 3, 1998

**Title:** An act relating to membership in the Washington state school directors' association.

**Brief Description:** Changing membership and dues provisions relating to the Washington state school directors' association.

**Sponsors:** Senators Stevens, Hochstatter and Swecker.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Education: 1/27/98, 2/3/98 [DPS, DNP].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6487 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Hochstatter, Chair; Finkbeiner, Vice Chair; Johnson and Zarelli.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe and Rasmussen.

**Staff:** Susan Mielke (786-7422)

**Background:** The Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA) was founded as a private association in the 1920s. In 1947, the Legislature statutorily designated WSSDA a state agency and required school board directors to be members of the association. WSSDA's primary statutory duty is to "effect a coordination of policymaking, control, and management of the school districts in the state."

WSSDA's 1998 budget is \$2.4 million. The agency is funded by: (1) dues paid by all the local school boards; (2) grants; and (3) fees received for various services. The agency employs 22 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees.

According to the National School Board Association, only two states, New Jersey and Washington, require all local school boards to belong to the local school board association. The annual association dues are paid by the local school district and not by the individual school board member, in all states. Four states have designated the local school board association as an "instrumentality of the state."

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** Membership in the Washington State School Directors' Association is made voluntary. Membership is authorized by a majority vote of a school board of directors.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** Voluntary membership in the Washington State School Directors' Association is authorized by a majority vote of a school board of directors. The requirement that the individual director pay the dues to the association is deleted.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For:** This bill is a way to get more state money into the classroom. The public is concerned with the school district bureaucracy; WSSDA contributes to that bureaucracy. The association has become a partisan group. WSSDA has legislative agendas and uses public funds to lobby for more public funds. Membership in an association should be voluntary, not mandatory.

**Testimony Against:** The association provides good information that helps elected officials make informed decisions. This bill will create fiscal instability for the association, which will inhibit its provision of quality services. The association is a nonpartisan association that follows an elaborate process to determine policies supported by the association. Partisan politics is not part of the discussion.

**Testified:** Senator Stevens, prime sponsor; Susan Magruder (pro); Arnold Hansen (pro); Warren Smith, Larry Swift, WSSDA (con); Robert Butts, OSPI (con); Barbara Mertens, WASA (con).