

SENATE BILL REPORT

SCR 8403

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Judiciary, February 13, 2001

Brief Description: Promoting state and tribal relations.

Sponsors: Senators T. Sheldon, Swecker, Kline, Regala, Prentice and Costa.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Judiciary: 1/25/01, 2/13/01 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Majority Report: That Substitute Concurrent Resolution No. 8403 be substituted therefor, and the substitute concurrent resolution do pass.

Signed by Senators Kline, Chair; Constantine, Vice Chair; Costa, Johnson, Kastama, Long, McCaslin and Roach.

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

Background: The Legislature recognizes 29 federally recognized Indian tribes in Washington with a combined population of over 91,000 members. These tribes have governmental operations with responsibilities to their citizens and their lands similar to those of Washington.

Summary of Substitute Bill: A joint legislative task force on legislative/tribal relations is established to review, study, and recommend how the Legislature and tribes may develop more effective relationships and cooperative mechanisms to address common issues. The intergovernmental methods used by other states and tribal governments must be studied and the committee may seek out others with expertise on the subject. The eight-member task force is comprised of four Senators appointed by the President of the Senate, and four Representatives appointed by the Co-Speakers of the House of Representatives.

The task force will send invitations to all federally recognized tribes in Washington to participate in the study and address the task force. The task force and participating tribes present their reports and recommendations to the Legislature not later than December 1, 2001, and the committee ceases to exist on December 15, 2001.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The task force consists of eight legislative members. There are no tribal members on the task force, but all the federally recognized tribes are sent invitations to participate in task force meetings. The task force and participating tribes present their reports on December 1, 2001.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Testimony For: The Legislature and tribes need to work together to gain a better understanding of each other and discuss common issues. The bill does no more than to provide a mechanism for the identification of issues and possible solutions so that relationships can be more fully addressed by the respective governments.

Testimony Against: All tribes must have an equal opportunity to participate. The tribes are all sovereign nations and must be treated as such. The Association of Washington tribes represents a minority of tribes in Washington.

Testified: PRO: John McCoy, Tulalip Tribes; Alan Parker, Northwest Indian Applied Research Institute; Randy Scott, Quinault Indian Nation. CON: Elmer Ward, Yakima Nation; Stu Halsan.