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SENATE BILL 5780

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State of Washington

65th Legislature

2017 Regular Session

By Senators Darneille, Walsh, Rolfes, Rivers, Saldaña, Angel, Wellman, Brown, Chase, Wilson, Cleveland, Keiser, Warnick, Short, Kuderer, Becker, Ranker, Bailey, Conway, and Hunt

Read first time 02/09/17. Referred to Committee on State Government.

1 AN ACT Relating to commemorating the centennial of national  
2 women's suffrage; adding a new chapter to Title 27 RCW; and providing  
3 an expiration date.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** On August 26, 1920, with the action of the  
6 Tennessee legislature, the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States  
7 Constitution was ratified, guaranteeing women throughout the country  
8 the right to vote. The introduction, passage, and ratification of the  
9 Nineteenth Amendment were the result of decades of work and struggle  
10 by women's voting rights advocates throughout the United States, with  
11 people from Washington state providing significant leadership.

12 In 1854, six years after the landmark women's rights convention  
13 in Seneca Falls, New York, the Washington territorial legislature  
14 initially considered enacting women's right to vote. Susan B. Anthony  
15 visited Washington territory in 1871, and addressed the Washington  
16 territorial legislature, the first woman in the country to address a  
17 legislative body. This spurred the creation of many women's right to  
18 vote associations in Washington and in other states.

19 State women's right to vote legislation eventually passed the  
20 Washington territorial legislature twice, but each time was found  
21 unconstitutional by the territorial supreme court. With the 1910

1 approval of a state constitutional amendment by the male voters of  
2 the state, Washington became the first state in the twentieth  
3 century, and the fifth state overall, to enact women's right to vote  
4 at the state level.

5 In 2009, the state of Washington posthumously awarded its highest  
6 honor, the medal of merit, to the two key leaders of the Washington  
7 women's right to vote movement, Emma Smith DeVoe and Mae Arkwright  
8 Hutton.

9 The path to women's suffrage was blazed by western states.  
10 Washington followed Wyoming (1890), Colorado (1893), Utah (1895), and  
11 Idaho (1896), and was immediately succeeded by California (1911) and  
12 Oregon (1912), in establishing women's right to vote.

13 Washington was a major leader in the movement for nationwide  
14 women's right to vote. Washington was the first state in the  
15 twentieth century to fully enfranchise women, and inspired the  
16 nationwide campaign that soon brought success in many western states  
17 and the territory of Alaska, culminating in the Nineteenth Amendment  
18 to the United States Constitution providing for women throughout the  
19 country to vote.

20 In 2010, the Washington women's history consortium provided  
21 leadership for statewide commemoration of the centennial of  
22 Washington state women's right to vote, sponsoring and coordinating a  
23 wide range of activities, including preparation of a major traveling  
24 exhibit.

25 The centennial of the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to the  
26 United States Constitution, in 2020, offers still greater  
27 opportunities for Washingtonians to commemorate and educate  
28 themselves about the importance of voting and civic engagement, the  
29 historic efforts of the women's right to vote movement in Washington  
30 and throughout the country, and the subsequent impacts of  
31 enfranchising women on life in Washington and the United States.

32 Therefore, the legislature finds it beneficial to begin the  
33 process of preparing for statewide commemoration in 2020 of the  
34 centennial of the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States  
35 Constitution, which established the right to vote for women  
36 throughout the country.

37 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The Washington women's history consortium  
38 shall:

1 (1) Provide leadership for a 2020 statewide commemoration of the  
2 centennial of the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment to the  
3 United States Constitution;

4 (2) Immediately begin preparations for this statewide  
5 commemoration, to include but not be limited to:

6 (a) Consulting with a wide variety of organizations,  
7 institutions, public agencies, and the general public about the  
8 content and conduct of this statewide commemoration;

9 (b) Developing and encouraging others to develop educational  
10 opportunities for the public to learn about the active leadership  
11 role of Washingtonians in achieving the nationwide right to vote for  
12 women;

13 (c) Developing and encouraging educational opportunities about  
14 the importance of voting in the context of women gaining the right to  
15 vote;

16 (d) Developing and encouraging educational opportunities about  
17 the subsequent long-term impacts of women gaining the right to vote;  
18 and

19 (e) Planning, coordinating, and publicizing events and  
20 informational materials throughout the state commemorating this  
21 centennial;

22 (3) Create and distribute a portfolio of public humanities  
23 programs, and encourage others to also do this, to engage the  
24 citizens of Washington with important aspects of the women's right to  
25 vote movement;

26 (4) Encourage private organizations and local governments to  
27 organize and participate in activities commemorating the centennial  
28 of the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution; and

29 (5) Administer a grant program for public agencies, educational  
30 institutions, and organizations exempt from taxation under Title 26  
31 U.S.C. Sec. 501(c)(3) of the federal internal revenue code to assist  
32 with their commemoration activities.

33 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** The consortium has the following powers,  
34 and may exercise them as necessary to carry out its duties:

35 (1) To appoint task forces or advisory committees;

36 (2) To work with staff appointed by the Washington state  
37 historical society;

38 (3) To enter into agreements or contracts; and

39 (4) To solicit, accept, use, and dispose of grants and gifts.

1        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 4.**    (1) Legislative members serving on the  
2 consortium or any task forces or advisory committees created must be  
3 reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with RCW 44.04.120.

4        (2) State and local government agency members must be reimbursed  
5 pursuant to the reimbursement policies of their respective agency or  
6 institution.

7        (3) Nonlegislative members are not entitled to be reimbursed for  
8 travel expenses if they are elected officials or are participating on  
9 behalf of an employer, governmental entity, or other organization.  
10 Any reimbursement for other nonlegislative members is subject to  
11 chapter 43.03 RCW.

12        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 5.**    The consortium shall report annually by  
13 December 1st to the governor and the legislature on the work of the  
14 consortium, together with any recommendations to the governor and  
15 legislature.

16        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 6.**    This chapter expires July 1, 2021.

17        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 7.**    Sections 1 through 6 of this act  
18 constitute a new chapter in Title 27 RCW.

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