
**State Government & Tribal Relations
Committee**

HB 2837

Brief Description: Expanding powers granted to state historical societies.

Sponsors: Representatives Boehnke and Hudgins; by request of Washington State Historical Society.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Permits state historical societies (Societies) to provide grants to support various programs and activities.
- Authorizes Societies to adopt rules.

Hearing Date: 2/5/20

Staff: Carrington Skinner (786-7192).

Background:

Washington's two state historical societies (Societies), the Washington State Historical Society and the Eastern Washington State Historical Society, are designated as trustees for the state. The Societies must maintain and preserve articles and properties that illustrate the history of the state for the use and benefit of the people of the state.

Among other powers and duties, the Societies:

- collect, catalog, preserve, and interpret objects, sites, and other materials illustrative of the cultural, artistic, and natural history of the state;
- operate state museums;
- plan for and conduct celebrations of significant events in Washington; and
- engage in fundraising activities.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The Eastern Washington State Historical Society operates the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture in Spokane and the Joel E. Ferris Research Archives. The Washington State Historical Society operates the Washington State History Museum in Tacoma, serves as the managing agency for the Women's History Consortium, and oversees the Capital Heritage Project program that provides funding from the state capital budget through grants for public history, heritage, and preservation projects.

Each Society's governing board appoints a director with the consent of the Governor. Budget requests must be submitted to the Washington State Heritage Council for review and comment.

Summary of Bill:

The Societies may provide grants at their discretion to cultural and historical organizations for:

- organizational capacity building;
- public programming;
- educational programming;
- outreach;
- collections management; and
- exhibitions.

The Societies are permitted to adopt rules under the Administrative Procedures Act to carry out policies and purposes related to their powers and duties.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Preliminary fiscal note available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.