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**HOUSE BILL 1692**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2023 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Bergquist, Christian, Gregerson, Santos, Pollet, Macri, and Simmons

AN ACT Relating to increasing youth engagement in the legislative process by creating student advisory groups to examine issues important to youth; amending RCW 43.15.095; adding a new section to chapter 28A.345 RCW; adding a new chapter to Title 44 RCW; and creating a new section.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature finds that people participating in their government is an essential part of developing public policy. Familiarizing students with their representative government's policy development process increases social responsibility and civic awareness that will benefit them now as students and later as adults while improving our state. The legislature further finds that policymakers can benefit from the input of students presently in our kindergarten through grade 12 school system and those attending a community or technical college, sharing insights and ideas on education and other issues affecting youth in our state. Therefore, the legislature intends to establish student councils, including 49 legislative district student councils each representing one legislative district to ensure proportional and geographical representation, to allow students to learn about and participate in our representative democracy and share policy ideas with their state elected officials.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) A legislative district student council is established in each legislative district to examine issues important to youth. Legislative district student councils are informal nonpartisan advisory bodies which may examine issues affecting youth and education and make recommendations to legislators on those issues. Each chair of a legislative district student council, selected pursuant to this section, shall coordinate with the legislators from the legislative district which the student member represents to stand up and maintain their district's student council. Each legislative district student council is facilitated by the legislative office or offices of legislators who elect to assist in facilitating the program. Participation in this process is discretionary for each legislator.

(2) Consistent with the provisions of this act, the legislative youth advisory council, in consultation with the student representative network created in section 3 of this act, shall develop:

(a) Processes and procedures that may be used to set up legislative district student councils;

(b) An application and selection process that may be used to select student members to serve on the council, including for the position of chair for each legislative district student council;

(c) A model process, program, and duties for legislative district student councils, which must include mechanisms for administration, supervision, and facilitation support to the legislative district student councils; and

(d) Model practices enabling public schools to conduct legislative district student council meetings as extracurricular activities.

(3) Each legislative district student council is composed of no more than 11 student members as follows:

(a) One chair, selected for each legislative district student council by the legislative youth advisory council, established under RCW 43.15.095. The legislative youth advisory council shall select the initial chairs no later than October 1, 2023, with the selection of the subsequent chairs being on June 1, 2025, and each June 1st every two years thereafter.

(b) To the extent possible, the Washington state school directors' association shall select up to five student board representatives from each legislative district who attend a public school that serves students in any of grades nine through 12 and are members of the Washington state school directors' association's student representatives network to receive automatic membership to that district's legislative district student council.

(c)(i) At least five additional members must be selected who are under the age of 21 at the start of their term and attend either a public school that serves students in any of grades nine through 12 or a community or technical college, which is located within that student council's legislative district.

(ii) Factors to consider for selection of the members described in this subsection (3)(c) include:

(A) Balancing representation among the various grades, with at least one student being in grade 11 and one being in grade 12; and

(B) Demonstrated a commitment to civic education through current participation in another local youth council.

(iii)(A) For the selection of initial members described in this subsection (3)(c) for new legislative district student councils, the legislative youth advisory council shall form a committee consisting of the chairs of each legislative district student council for the purpose of selecting members for each legislative district student council from the applications submitted. Initial members must be selected by January 15, 2024.

(B) Subsequent selection of members described in this subsection (3)(c) shall be the responsibility of each legislative district student council and must occur no later than January 15, 2026, and on January 15th every two years thereafter.

(4) To the closest extent feasible, the members of each legislative district student council must attend either a public school that serves students in any of grades nine through 12 or a community or technical college, that is in their council's legislative district. If there are no applicants from a legislative district, qualifying students who attend a public school that serves students in any of grades nine through 12 or a community or technical college located in an adjacent legislative district may be selected for membership.

(5) Membership terms are as follows:

(a) Of the chairs initially selected, each chair shall serve two-year terms except that students who are in grade 12 shall serve a one-year term but may serve the full two-year term if they attend a community or technical college within the student council's legislative district in the following year. The term of each subsequent chair shall be two years, but qualifying chairs may be selected for subsequent two-year terms.

(b) Of the members initially selected to serve on a legislative district student council, each member shall serve a two-year term, except that students who are in grade 12 shall serve a one-year term but may serve the full two-year term if they attend a community or technical college within the student council's legislative district in the following year. The term of each subsequent eligible member shall be two years, but members may be selected for subsequent two-year terms.

(c) In the case of a vacancy, the selection of a student member to fill the remainder of an unexpired term must be conducted in the same manner as the original appointment.

(6) Each student council may not conduct more than four in-person meetings, with one of the in-person meetings occurring in person in Olympia on the day of youth civic education organized by the legislative youth advisory council, in collaboration with the student representative network, pursuant to RCW 43.15.095(6)(g). Each student council must attend the day of youth civic education in Olympia.

(7) The legislature, any agency of the legislature, and any official or employee of such office or agency are immune from liability for any injury that is incurred by or caused by a member of the legislative district student council and that occurs while the member of the council is performing duties of the council. The immunity provided by this subsection does not apply to an injury intentionally caused by the act or omission of an employee or official of the office of the legislature or any agency of the legislature.

(8) As used in this section:

(a) "Public school" has the same meaning as in RCW 28A.150.010.

(b) "Student board representative" has the same definition as in section 3 of this act.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28A.345 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The Washington state school directors' association shall form a student representative network to examine issues important to youth and engage student school board representatives in the legislative process.

(2) Subject to the supervision of the Washington state school directors' association, the duties of the student representative network are as follows:

(a) Advise the legislature through feedback and testimony on proposed and pending legislation, including policy matters relating to youth;

(b) Advise the standing committees of the legislature and study commissions, committees, and task forces through feedback and testimony on issues relating to youth;

(c) Collaborate with the legislative youth advisory council established under RCW 43.15.095 to organize an in-person annual day of youth civic education in Olympia;

(d) Develop and assemble resources for new and existing student board representatives;

(e) Provide writing, photos, and other content for the Washington state school directors' association publications in consultation with Washington state school directors' association staff;

(f) Collaborate with the Washington state school directors' association standing committees, advisory committees, task forces, and caucuses as invited; and

(g) Provide additional student voices at Washington state school directors' association events in consultation with Washington state school directors' association staff.

(3) When acting on behalf of the student representative network, advocacy position and policy recommendations from network members shall be in accordance with the Washington state school directors' association's approved permanent and legislative positions. When acting on behalf of individual school districts, legislative district student councils, or the legislative youth advisory council established under RCW 43.15.095, advocacy positions and policy recommendations made by network members are considered independent from the Washington state school directors' association.

(4) In supporting the student representative network, the Washington state school directors' association shall provide network members the ability to learn about education policy issues and determine best practices for establishing and supporting student councils. Additionally, the Washington state school directors' association shall facilitate a connection between network members and the legislators in their legislative district.

(5) All student board representatives are automatically members of the student representative network. The Washington state school directors' association shall engage in outreach annually to each school district to provide information about the student representative network. To the greatest extent feasible, the Washington state school directors' association shall identify at least one student board representative from each legislative district to participate in the student representative network. In legislative districts where there are no established student board representatives, the Washington state school directors' association shall communicate with school districts to create awareness of and share best practices about the role and encourage participation.

(6) The Washington state school directors' association shall invite elected officials of the Washington legislature to participate in the student representative network in an advisory capacity.

(7) The student representative network shall meet at least four times per year, with one annual meeting occurring in person in Olympia on a day established as a day of youth civic education. The number of in-person meetings may not exceed four.

(8) The Washington state school directors' association, the legislature, any agency of the legislature, and any official or employee of such office or agency are immune from liability for any injury that is incurred by or caused by a member of the student representative network and that occurs while the member of the network is performing duties of the network or is otherwise engaged in activities or receiving services for which reimbursement is allowed under subsection (7) of this section. The immunity provided by this subsection does not apply to an injury intentionally caused by the act or omission of an employee or official of the Washington state school directors' association, the legislature, or any agency of the legislature.

(9) In compliance with RCW 43.01.036, the student representative network, in consultation and with the support of Washington state school directors' association staff, shall report on December 1st of each year to the appropriate committees of the legislature on the number of student board representatives in Washington and the activities of the network.

(10) As used in this section, "student board representative" means a student who is recognized by their local school board as a representative of the student body serving on that board.

**Sec.**  RCW 43.15.095 and 2022 c 96 s 6 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The legislative youth advisory council is established to examine issues of importance to youth, including but not limited to education, employment, strategies to increase youth participation in state and municipal government, safe environments for youth, substance abuse, emotional and physical health, foster care, poverty, homelessness, and youth access to services on a statewide and municipal basis.

(2) The council consists of at least ((~~twenty-two~~)) 22 members as provided in this subsection who, at the time of appointment, are ((~~aged~~)) age ((~~fourteen to eighteen~~)) 14 to 18. The council shall select a chair from among its members.

(3) Members shall serve two-year terms and, if eligible, may be reappointed for subsequent two-year terms.

(4)(a) Students may apply annually to be considered for participation in the program by completing an online application form and submitting the application to the legislative youth advisory council. The council may develop selection criteria and an application review process. The council shall recommend candidates whose names will be submitted to the office of the lieutenant governor for final selection. The office of the lieutenant governor shall notify all applicants of the final selections.

(b) The office of the lieutenant governor shall make the application available on the lieutenant governor's website.

(5) The legislative youth advisory council shall explore options to expand its appointed membership and other methods of student participation in the legislative youth advisory council to include the participation of students from each legislative district who attend a public school that serves students in any of grades nine through 12 or a community or technical college in that district.

(6) Subject to the supervision of the office of the lieutenant governor, the council shall have the following duties:

(a) Advising the legislature on proposed and pending legislation, including state budget expenditures and policy matters relating to youth;

(b) Advising the standing committees of the legislature and study commissions, committees, and task forces regarding issues relating to youth;

(c) Conducting periodic seminars for its members regarding leadership, government, and the legislature;

(d) Accepting and soliciting for grants and donations from public and private sources to support the activities of the council; ((~~and~~))

(e) In consultation with the student representative network created in section 3 of this act, developing processes and procedures pertaining to legislative district student councils, in accordance with section 2(2) of this act;

(f) Selecting a chair for each legislative district student council, pursuant to section 2 of this act;

(g) In coordination with the student representative network, organizing an in-person annual day of youth civic education in Olympia; and

(h) Reporting annually by December 1st to the legislature on its activities, including proposed legislation that implements recommendations of the council.

((~~(6)~~)) (7) In carrying out its duties under this section, the council must meet at least three times per year. The council is encouraged to use technology, such as remote videoconferencing technology, to facilitate members' participation in meetings. The council is encouraged to invite local state legislators to participate in the meetings. The council is encouraged to poll other students in order to get a broad perspective on various policy issues. The council is encouraged to use technology to conduct polling.

((~~(7)~~)) (8) Members may be reimbursed as provided in RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060.

((~~(8)~~)) (9) The office of the lieutenant governor shall provide administration, supervision, and facilitation support to the council. In facilitating the program, the office of the lieutenant governor may collaborate with the Washington state leadership board established in RCW 43.388.010. The senate and house of representatives may provide policy and fiscal briefings and assistance with drafting proposed legislation. The senate and the house of representatives shall each develop internal policies relating to staff assistance provided to the council. Such policies may include applicable internal personnel and practices guidelines, resource use and expense reimbursement guidelines, and applicable ethics mandates. Provision of funds, resources, and staff, as well as the assignment and direction of staff, remains at all times within the sole discretion of the chamber making the provision.

((~~(9)~~)) (10) The office of the lieutenant governor, the legislature, any agency of the legislature, and any official or employee of such office or agency are immune from liability for any injury that is incurred by or caused by a member of the legislative youth advisory council and that occurs while the member of the council is performing duties of the council or is otherwise engaged in activities or receiving services for which reimbursement is allowed under subsection ((~~(7)~~)) (8) of this section. The immunity provided by this subsection does not apply to an injury intentionally caused by the act or omission of an employee or official of the office of the lieutenant governor, the legislature, or any agency of the legislature.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  Section 2 of this act constitutes a new chapter in Title 44 RCW.

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