

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2540

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Higher Education*

Title: An act relating to American Indians.

Brief Description: Establishing a center for the development of curriculum of American Indians of the Northwest.

Sponsor(s): Representatives Jacobsen, Dellwo, Wood, Zellinsky, Wineberry, Schmidt, Wilson, Paris, Wang, J. Kohl, O'Brien and Anderson.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Higher Education, February 5, 1992, DPS.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
HIGHER EDUCATION**

Majority Report: *The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass.* Signed by 11 members: Representatives Jacobsen, Chair; Ogden, Vice Chair; Wood, Ranking Minority Member; May, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Dellwo; Fraser; Ludwig; Miller; Sheldon; Spanel; and Van Luven.

Staff: Marilee Scarbrough (786-7196).

Background: Recent studies of the American educational system indicate that many education and business leaders believe that the United States can no longer afford to look on geography, languages and area studies as mere luxuries. The leaders believe that, if the citizens of this country are to survive in an ever shrinking world, educators must begin to teach these subjects as basics.

Of particular importance in the Pacific Northwest is the culture and history of American Indians. Historians agree that the tribes of the Pacific Northwest have a major impact on the development and the culture of the area. Many educators advocate that Washington state students need a greater understanding and appreciation of the contributions of American Indians to the culture, economy and politics of this region.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Higher Education Coordinating Board will design a plan for the creation of a center for the development of curriculum on American Indians of the Northwest. The plan shall include a process for selecting an institution to administer the program and a funding proposal to implement the plan. The board will submit the plan to the Legislature for approval by December 1, 1992.

Subject to legislative funding in the 1993-95 biennium, the board will select an institution to administer the center beginning in July of 1993. The board may appoint an advisory committee to assist in selecting the institution. The board may prioritize proposals based on sensitivity to the needs of teachers and members of the American Indian community and consider institutional roles and missions in selecting an institution.

The designated institution shall adopt a plan for administering the center and submit the plan to the board for approval by December 1, 1993. The president of the designated institution shall appoint a committee to advise the center. The committee shall be composed of individuals representing, the governor's Office of Indian affairs, the Indian Educators Association, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, teachers, professors in schools and colleges of education, and members of Washington's Indian tribes.

The purpose of the center includes: (1) developing curriculum for students in K-12 on American Indian history, government and philosophy; (2) assisting school districts in evaluating the portrayal of American Indians in textbooks, when funding is available; (3) working with institutions of higher education to develop course work and materials for prospective teachers on the history, philosophy, psychology and government of the American Indians; (4) providing workshops and materials to teachers, professors and school administrators; and (5) working with American Indian leaders, educators and community leaders to ensure the center focuses on issues of concern to American Indians; and seeks additional funding from federal, local and private sources.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute requires that the board submit a plan for the creation of the center by December 1, 1992. In the substitute bill, creation of the center is contingent upon funding in the 1993-95 biennium. After funding is approved and the institution is selected, the designated institution is required to submit a plan for administration of the center

to the Higher Education Coordination Board for approval by December 1, 1993.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: Section 1 becomes effective 90 days after adjournment of the session in which bill is passed. Sections 2 through 5 become effective July 1, 1993.

Testimony For: This legislation would benefit all children and all teachers. It would bring people together, currently teachers do not often have the opportunity to meet with Indian educators. Indian educators could come together with various groups to develop the center. Teachers need to be more sensitive to Indian children and their heritage. The center would start a mechanism to develop curriculum for those who teach in Indian school districts. Current textbooks do not contain American Indian history in a form that is appropriate for teaching. Appropriate materials are available, a mechanism is needed to distribute this information to school districts. Washington should have a requirement that every student take a course in the history of an ethnic group other than their own. The center would allow development of curriculum which is relevant to American Indians. The center would create a sense of pride for American Indians. A lack of appropriate curriculum on American Indian students fosters stereotypes and negative images of American Indians.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Marian Boushie, Coordinator of Indian Educators' Association; Darlena Watt-Palmanteer, Colville Business Council, Colville Tribe; Jens Stahmer, South Puget Sound Community College student; Dawn Vyvyan, Yakima Indian Nation; Gloria Bean, Puyallup Tribe; and John Baller, Director of Education, Quinault Indian Nation (all pro).