

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5475

AS PASSED SENATE, MARCH 6, 1991

Brief Description: Authorizing honorary degrees.

SPONSORS: Senators Bauer, Saling, Rinehart, Bailey and Murray.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Saling, Chairman; Patterson, Vice Chairman; Bauer, Bluechel, Stratton, von Reichbauer, and Jesernig.

Staff: Jean Six (786-7423)

Hearing Dates: February 13, 1991

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

BACKGROUND:

The University of Washington and Washington State University are permitted, by law, to grant honorary degrees. Upon recommendation of the faculty, the honorary degrees may be given to persons who did not graduate from the universities. The honorary degrees are conferred in recognition of a person's learning or devotion to literature, art, or science. Honorary degrees cannot be granted for money or for donation of any kind of property.

SUMMARY:

Upon recommendation of the faculty, the governing boards of the regional institutions of higher education, and the governing boards of the community colleges, may grant honorary degrees. The honorary degrees may be granted to people who did not graduate from the institution in recognition of their learning or devotion to education, literature, art, or science. No degree may be given for money or for the donation of any kind of property.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: requested February 4, 1991

TESTIMONY FOR:

The community colleges will use the degrees sparingly to honor only those people who have made a significant contribution to the college.

TESTIMONY AGAINST:

Some people use honorary degrees to misrepresent their academic standing.

TESTIFIED: Jan Yoshiwara, SBCCE (pro); Lytle Blaisdell, PTA (con)

HOUSE AMENDMENT(S):

Authority is no longer given to the regional institutions or the community colleges to confer honorary degrees. Mandatory retirement for employees of public institutions of higher education is eliminated. Certain tribally controlled colleges are included in the definition of institutions of higher education for purposes of financial aid eligibility. A physical access committee is created at each institution of higher education.