

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5957

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, FEBRUARY 4, 1992

Brief Description: Prescribing higher education support in budget.

SPONSORS: Senators Thorsness, Stratton, Saling, Jesernig, Nelson, Skratek, Snyder, von Reichbauer, A. Smith, Johnson, Patterson, Sellar, Metcalf, Hayner, Craswell, Bailey, L. Smith, Bauer, Conner, Sutherland and Gaspard

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

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

Staff: Jean Six (786-7423)

Hearing Dates: January 23, 1992; February 4, 1992

BACKGROUND:

From a high level of 20.8 percent in the mid 1970s to the current level of 14.5 percent following the December 1991 budget reduction, the portion of the state budget going to higher education in Washington State has decreased by 6.3 percent.

While population in the state has increased and the demand for a more educated citizenry is widely acknowledged, the percent of the state budget going to higher education is spiraling downward.

SUMMARY:

Beginning with the 1992-93 fiscal year the state operating budget for higher education shall be increased by a minimum of 1 percent until the percentage of the general fund state operating budget for higher education is at or above 18 percent. Once that level is reached, the percentage level for state higher education shall not fall below 18 percent of the general fund state operating budget.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: available

TESTIMONY FOR:

Higher education deserves adequate funding. As a proportion of the state budget, higher education is slipping; this is a national trend. However, is it appropriate to set funding level percentage in statute.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: Senator Thorsness, prime sponsor (pro); Judy McNickle, HECB (neutral); Terry Teale, COP (neutral); Tom McKinley, Steve Lindstrom, EWU/WSL (pro); Sue Durant, CFR (pro); Kathy Locatti, WSL (pro)