

SENATE BILL 5350

State of Washington

52nd Legislature

1991 Regular Session

By Senators Saling, Patterson, Thorsness, Bauer, Metcalf, Gaspard, Cantu, Amondson, Sellar, Hayner, Stratton, Craswell, Wojahn and Snyder.

Read first time January 29, 1991. Referred to Committee on Higher Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to requiring English proficiency for faculty and
2 graduate assistants at state institutions of higher education; adding
3 new sections to chapter 28B.10 RCW; and creating a new section.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that the large
6 number of international graduate students has highlighted the need for
7 state institutions of higher education to give careful attention to the
8 issues of language proficiency, sensitivity to cultural differences,
9 and pedagogical skills when making faculty and graduate service
10 appointments. The legislature also finds that the quality of the
11 undergraduate learning experience at many state institutions of higher
12 education is directly affected by graduate teaching assistants who are
13 responsible for a significant percentage of class sections taught in
14 lower-division courses. The legislature recognizes that over the years
15 it has received reports about the problems some students experience in

1 understanding the English language as spoken by some of the graduate
2 teaching assistants employed as instructors at our state institutions.
3 It is the intent of the legislature to assure students and parents that
4 instructors at our state institutions of higher education are
5 proficient in writing and speaking the English language.

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.10
7 RCW to read as follows:

8 (1) A person who has received a faculty or graduate assistant
9 appointment in which that person will be providing classroom
10 instruction, or will work with students in participatory
11 and activity courses such as clinics, studios, seminars, and
12 laboratories, shall be fluent in both written and spoken English
13 language.

14 (2) A person who has received a faculty or graduate assistant
15 appointment in which the classroom instruction to be provided is
16 specifically designed to be taught predominately in a foreign language
17 is exempt from subsection (1) of this section.

18 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.10
19 RCW to read as follows:

20 (1) Each state institution of higher education shall evaluate its
21 instructional faculty and graduate assistants for fluency in English as
22 such fluency pertains to the classroom, laboratory, studio, and seminar
23 setting. Fluency shall be evaluated using varied and appropriate
24 criteria including, but not limited to, personal interviews; peer,
25 alumni, and student observations and evaluations; publications;
26 professional presentations; and tests.

27 (2) Faculty and graduate assistants whose first or primary
28 language is other than English shall pass the speaking proficiency

1 English assessment kit test with a score of two hundred thirty or
2 above, before an assignment to classroom, laboratory, studio, or
3 seminar duties. Faculty and graduate assistants whose assignments
4 include instruction specifically designed to be provided predominately
5 in a foreign language are exempt from this subsection.

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** If any provision of this act or its
7 application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the
8 remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other
9 persons or circumstances is not affected.