

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 3031

As Reported by House Committee On:

Education

Title: An act relating to certification of teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing.

Brief Description: Provide for certification of teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing.

Sponsors: Representatives McDermott, Dickerson, Santos, Kenney, Simpson, D., Quall, Conway and Kagi.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/2/04, 2/5/04 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Directing the State Board of Education to develop a certification program for teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; McDermott, Vice Chair; Talcott, Ranking Minority Member; Tom, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Cox, Haigh, Hunter, McMahan, Rockefeller and Santos.

Staff: Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

Background:

During 2003, the House Children and Family Services Committee assembled the Work Group on Deaf Education in Washington (Work Group). The group's purpose was to consider the respective roles of, and the relationships among, the Washington School for the Deaf (WSD), local school districts, educational service districts, community services, and community resources in the delivery of effective education to hearing impaired children throughout the state. In addition, the Work Group considered different appropriate service delivery models for hearing impaired children.

The Work Group included representation from parents and teachers of hearing impaired children, the Governor, the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), educators, the Board of Trustees of the Washington School for the Deaf, the Washington Sensory Disabilities Services, and the Infant Toddler Early Intervention Program. In addition, four members of the Senate, a member of the House Education Committee, and the members of the House Children and Family Services Committee served on the Work Group.

The Work Group held three meetings over the course of the interim to discuss a range of issues, including current service delivery in the state from newborn hearing screening and early intervention services through the P-12 system, technological advances relating to hearing impairment, and the most recent research on outcomes and costs relating to hearing impairment.

At the final meeting of the Work Group, the members developed consensus statements, which reflect the basic principles agreed upon by all of the members of the Work Group, and goals and policy recommendations, which are based upon those consensus statements. One of the goals of the Work Group was the certification of teachers who have the educational and communication skills required to meet the needs of hearing impaired students.

The State Board of Education (SBE) establishes certification requirements for teachers and educational staff associates. Teachers must be endorsed in a particular area of expertise from a list adopted by rule by the SBE. Special Education is one of the endorsements available to teachers. An endorsement in the specialty area of education designed exclusively for hearing impaired students is not included on the list of permissible endorsements.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The SBE, with advice from the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB), will develop certification requirements for teachers of hearing impaired students. The certification standards will be based on the skills and knowledge necessary to serve the education and communication needs of these students, and may be limited to work with hearing impaired students. When establishing the certification rules, the board will consider special education endorsement requirements to have been met by applicants who intend to teach hearing impaired students if the applicants have a baccalaureate or master's degree from a teacher training program that has been approved by the Council on Education of the Deaf.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The state board will receive advice from the PESB in the development of the certification

standards. The state board will not "waive" special education endorsement requirements. It will instead consider the requirements to be met by applicants with a degree from a program approved by the Council on Education of the Deaf.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The SBE does not have or recognize an endorsement for teachers of deaf or hard of hearing students. Institutions of higher education in the state do not have preparation programs designed to prepare teachers to work with the diverse needs and learning styles of deaf and hard of hearing students. Teachers who wish to become trained in the knowledge and skill necessary to provide a broad spectrum of educational and language approaches to these students must be educated out-of-state, and then must try to fit that training into the state's certification requirements. This bill sends a message that the state needs to accept and recognize high quality preparation programs for teachers and interpreters of deaf students.

(Concerns: original bill) The legislation needs to ensure that teachers who are certificated through out-of-state programs receive the training required to meet this state's definition of a highly qualified teacher so that the state is not out of compliance with federal education laws.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Larry Peterson, Washington State Association of the Deaf and Washington State Hearing Loss Alliance; and Lynn Maier, Washington Public Employees Association.

(In support with concerns) Larry Davis, State Board of Education; Greg Williamson, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; and Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.