

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1059

As Reported by House Committee On:
Trade & Economic Development

Title: An act relating to the creation of a joint legislative oversight committee on trade policy.

Brief Description: Creating a joint committee on trade policy.

Sponsors: Representatives Veloria, Sump, Grant and Clements.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Trade & Economic Development: 1/31/03, 2/7/03 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Creates the Joint Legislative Committee on Trade Policy.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRADE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Veloria, Chair; Eickmeyer, Vice Chair; Skinner, Ranking Minority Member; McDonald, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Blake, Chase, Condotta, Kristiansen, McCoy, Pettigrew and Priest.

Staff: Tracey Taylor (786-7196).

Background:

Washington's economy relies significantly on international trade. Currently, there are many international agreements and ongoing negotiations that could significantly impact Washington's economy, regulations and statutes. Some of the changes could threaten the status quos while others can provide a golden opportunity. Currently, there is no formal role for the Legislature to weigh in on the debate nor any formal and focused legislative audience to concentrate on such agreements and negotiations.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

A Joint Legislative Committee on Trade Policy (Committee) is created. The Committee will include four senators and four representatives and three ex-officio members. The senators, two from each of the two largest political parties, will be appointed by the President of the Senate (President). The representatives, two from each of the two largest political parties, will be appointed by the Speaker of the House (Speaker). Vacancies are filled by appointment by the Speaker or President, and must be filled by the same house and party as the member whose seat is being vacated. The ex-officio members who are appointed by the Speaker and the President must include representatives from the Department of Agriculture and the Office of the Attorney General as well as the state trade representative.

At least once per year, the Committee must hear public testimony on the actual impacts of international trade agreements and negotiations on Washington state. They must submit a report on the public testimony to the state trade representative and the Legislature.

The Committee must maintain active communication with the state trade representative's office, the United States trade representative's office, Washington's congressional delegation, the National Conference of State Legislatures as well as other appropriate groups regarding ongoing developments in international trade agreements and policy.

The Committee must conduct an annual assessment of the impact of international trade agreements on Washington law and report their findings to the Legislature.

Staff support will be provided by Senate Committee Services and the Office of Program Research.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill authorizes the Speaker and the President to fill vacancies on the committee instead of the committee itself making the appointment to fill a vacancy. The Speaker and the President are also granted authority to appoint the ex-officio members. The substitute bill specifies that staff support will come from Senate Committee Services and the Office of Program Research and uses the standard travel reimbursement language for committee members.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect ninety days after adjournment of

session in which bill is passed, except for Section 2, relating to a joint legislative oversight committee on trade policy, which takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: The world is shrinking -- globalization is here and now. As the most trade dependent state in the nation, we need to be aware of decisions being made that will affect us. We cannot assume that the federal government will consider or understand the impact of international agreements on Washington. We need to be on the cutting edge in our approach and have a forum and mechanism to develop well-grounded suggestions and questions for consideration by our U.S. trade representatives. This committee will provide the needed focus and forum.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Maria Cain, Asian Pacific Environmental Exchange; and Sally Soriano, People for Fair Trade.