

FINAL BILL REPORT

SHB 1173

PARTIAL VETO

C 346 L 03

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Revising provisions for the office of the Washington state trade representative.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Trade & Economic Development (originally sponsored by Representatives Veloria, Conway and Chase).

House Committee on Trade & Economic Development
House Committee on Appropriations
Senate Committee on Commerce & Trade

Background:

Washington's economy relies significantly on international trade, which is often governed by trade agreements and international organizations. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and the World Trade Organization (WTO) are examples of international agreements and organizations that can and do have an impact on Washington businesses.

The Office of the Washington State Trade Representative (WSTR) was created by the Legislature in 1995. The WSTR is the state's official liaison to foreign governments on trade matters.

The WSTR is authorized to accept or request grants or gifts from citizens and other private sources. These funds may be used to help defray the costs of hosting foreign dignitaries and other activities of the WSTR. The WSTR must open and maintain a bank account for the deposit of all receipts of grants and gifts. All money and interest earned in the WSTR bank account are not considered public funds and are not subject to appropriation or the state's budgeting, accounting, or reporting requirements.

Summary:

The duties of the WSTR are expanded to include working with the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (DCTED), the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA), and other appropriate state agencies to review and analyze proposed international trade agreements and their impact on Washington businesses. This must be done within existing resources. The WSTR is directed to provide input to the office of the United States Trade Representative about policy

developments that could affect Washington.

In addition, the WSTR must work with the International Trade Division at the DCTED and the International Marketing Program at the WSDA to develop a statewide strategy to increase the export of Washington goods and services.

The WSTR will serve as a liaison to the Legislature on matters of trade policy and keep the Legislature informed about the ongoing trade negotiations, trade developments and any possible impacts on the Washington economy. In addition, the WSTR office shall prepare and submit an annual report on its activities and deliver it to the Governor and the appropriate standing committees of the Legislature. Finally, the WSTR shall conduct other activities to promote international trade and foreign investment within the state as directed by the Governor.

The language authorizing the WSTR to accept private monies and maintain a separate account is moved to a stand-alone section.

Votes on Final Passage:

House 95 0

Senate 45 0 (Senate amended)

House (House refused to concur)

Senate 47 0 (Senate receded)

Effective: July 27, 2003

Partial Veto Summary: The Governor vetoed the section requiring an annual report.