

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2899

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Higher Education, February 27, 2008
Ways & Means, March 03, 2008

Title: An act relating to adult literacy education.

Brief Description: Promoting and providing resources for adult literacy education.

Sponsors: House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Darneille, Santos, Roberts, Williams, Green, Kagi, Simpson and Kenney).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/14/08, 94-0.

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 2/21/08, 2/27/08 [DP-WM].

Ways & Means: 3/3/08 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

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

Signed by Senators Shin, Chair; Kilmer, Vice Chair; Delvin, Ranking Minority Member; Berkey, Schoesler and Sheldon.

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Fraser, Vice Chair, Capital Budget Chair; Pridemore, Vice Chair, Operating Budget; Zarelli, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Fairley, Hatfield, Hobbs, Keiser, Kohl-Welles, Parlette, Rasmussen, Rockefeller, Schoesler and Tom.

Staff: Tim Yowell (786-7435)

Background: Washington has in place various literacy programs and initiatives. One of the responsibilities of the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) is to ensure that each college district offers adult education, including basic skills and general, family, and workforce literacy programs and services. The SBCTC personnel administering state and federally funded programs for adult basic skills and literacy education are known as the State Office for Adult Literacy. There are various adult education providers offering learning options and the SBCTC distributes funds, through a competitive process, to support these programs. As of June 30, 2007, there were 34 community and technical colleges and 15

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

community organizations within this network of providers. Programs offered include: Adult Basic Education; English as a Second Language; English Literacy/Civics Education; Adult Secondary Education; Family Literacy; Workplace Basic Skills; Voluntary Literacy Programs; and Corrections Education.

Summary of Bill: By December 1, 2008, the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) completes a study of the status of adult literacy education and reports to the Governor, the appropriate legislative committees, and the SBCTC. This study must include: a review of literacy rates nationally, in the state as a whole, and by county; a review of the literature on adult literacy; a description of the literacy-related services currently available; and an analysis of data regarding literacy levels including, but not limited to, data relating to clients served by the Department of Social and Health Services, students enrolled in the public K-12 schools, students at the community and technical colleges, and incarcerated individuals under the supervision of the Department of Corrections. After the WSIPP submits its report, the SBCTC convenes a one-day literacy summit. The goal of the summit is to provide information regarding adult literacy and adult literacy education.

Two years after the due date for the WSIPP report, and every two years thereafter, the SBCTC submits a status report on literacy to the Governor and the appropriate legislative policy committees. These status reports must include: a summary of local, state, and national literacy initiatives; a description of the literacy programs offered in the state; a description of efforts aimed at advertising literacy programs and services and making them more available and affordable; performance measures and targets, as well as whether and how these were met and will be met; current information about proven and effective means for improving outcomes; and strategies and recommendations for professional development for adult literacy instructional personnel.

The SBCTC conducts a media campaign to increase public awareness about the availability of literacy services and resources and to publicize the benefits from literacy which result to the individual, the family, the community, and the workforce. The SBCTC may subcontract all or part of the media campaign to qualified private nonprofit organizations.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Substitute Bill (Higher Education): PRO: We are not adequately addressing adult literacy. We are only meeting 10 percent of the need. Thirty-five percent of adults can't adequately complete a job application. The legislation will help us specifically identify needs and methods to address them. We need the Washington-based research included in the bill. This will also help raise public awareness of adult literacy issues. There is a correlation between parental literacy and the academic success of children.

OTHER: The WTECB has no official position on the legislation, but supports the policy.

Persons Testifying (Higher Education): PRO: Representative Darneille, prime sponsor; Kathy Cooper, SBCTC; Cindy Wilson, Grays Harbor College; Lisa Schubert, Lee Jewett, Literacy Network of Washington/Tacoma Community House; Deborah Reck, Tacoma Community House.

OTHER: Wes Pruitt, WTECB.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Ways & Means): PRO: This bill would help leverage the extra adult basic education capacity that was funded in the biennial budget last year. Hundreds of thousands of Washington adults need English language instruction, and/or don't have a high school diploma.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means): PRO: Kathy Cooper, State Board for Community & Technical Colleges; Lisa Schubert, Tacoma Community House.