

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6539

As of January 30, 2008

Title: An act relating to polytechnic colleges.

Brief Description: Authorizing the higher education coordinating board to study the feasibility of a polytechnic college.

Sponsors: Senators McAuliffe, Shin, Jacobsen, Rasmussen, Tom, Murray, Hobbs, Pridemore, Regala, Kastama, Fraser, Fairley, Hatfield and Eide.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education: 1/28/08.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

Background: The Legislature has recognized a state priority for institutions of higher education (institutions) to encourage growing numbers of enrollments in engineering, technology, biotechnology, sciences, computer sciences, and mathematics. Institutions must determine local demand for students in these fields and submit findings and proposed alternatives to meet the demand by November 2008. In meeting these objectives, institutions may consider the establishment of institutes of technology, new polytechnic-based institutions, and new divisions of existing institutions, as well as a flexible array of delivery models.

Summary of Bill: Washington institutions of higher education may examine their instructional programs, costs, research initiatives, student enrollment characteristics, and regional context and make recommendations to the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) regarding the desirability and feasibility of evolving into four-year degree granting institutions with a polytechnical focus. These recommendations are due by June 1, 2009.

The HECB must analyze the recommendation of each campus utilizing a statewide context and provide policy options along with the original campus recommendations to the Legislature by December 1, 2009. The HECB recommendations must also include a review of polytechnical institutions in other states and include a proposed model for a polytechnical focused four-year institution.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 21, 2008.

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.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This is a first step in bringing better programs for high demand fields to all regions of the state. By providing more regional opportunities for polytechnic degrees, this will expand access for students.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator McAuliffe, prime sponsor.