

SENATE RESOLUTION
8639

By Senator Jacobsen

WHEREAS, The University of Washington Scandinavian department started out as a cordial conversation between three Swedish-American students who wished to see their proud language taught at their university; and

WHEREAS, Carl E. Magnusson, professor of engineering, assisted the students in addressing the issue before the university's board of regents. The board received a petition with hundreds of signatures from Scandinavian residents and students wishing to have their native languages taught; and

WHEREAS, Magnusson was quoted saying, "Members of the legislature as well as candidates running for legislative offices were approached through letters and in personal interviews, and their cooperation was solicited." Legislation creating the department passed the Senate on March 10, 1909, and the House on March 11, 1909; and

WHEREAS, In 1910, David Nyvall was appointed as the first professor of Scandinavian by the board of regents. That first year, courses in Swedish, Norwegian, history of Norwegian and Danish literature, history of Swedish literature, and Old Norse grammar were taught; and

WHEREAS, In 1912, Edwin J. Vickner assumed the chair of the department, expanding course offerings and enrollment, and winning regional and national recognition. Vickner also pioneered the teaching of Scandinavian literature in English translation; and

WHEREAS, In 1948, the Danish government chose the University of Washington as the site for the first Danish chair in the United States. Notably, Sven H. Rossel was knighted by Queen Margrethe II of Denmark in 1987 for his contributions to Danish studies; and

WHEREAS, The department's library collection is now one of the nation's top five research collections and is considered the best all-around collection on the West Coast. The library has the most important Hans Christian Andersen collection outside of Denmark; its Faroese collection is regarded as the only noteworthy collection in the United States; and

WHEREAS, To this day, the department remains just one of a few that was created specifically at the request and perseverance of our state's citizens;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Washington State Senate honor the Scandinavian department on its 100th anniversary for continuing to preserve and cultivate Scandinavian culture not only in the state of Washington, but the entire United States of America.