

---

**SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5136**

---

**State of Washington**

**62nd Legislature**

**2011 Regular Session**

**By** Senate Higher Education & Workforce Development (originally sponsored by Senators Kastama, Tom, Hobbs, Chase, Rockefeller, Haugen, McAuliffe, Shin, Hargrove, Harper, Hatfield, Zarelli, and Litzow)

READ FIRST TIME 02/18/11.

1       AN ACT Relating to establishing the first Washington nonprofit  
2 online university; adding a new section to chapter 28B.76 RCW; and  
3 creating a new section.

4       BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5       NEW SECTION.   **Sec. 1.**   The legislature finds that the key to  
6 Washington's economic prosperity over the past twenty years has been a  
7 thriving employment sector for workers who have high levels of  
8 education. The legislature finds that by 2018, sixty-seven percent of  
9 all jobs in Washington will require some postsecondary education - the  
10 fifth highest in the nation - and that between 2011 and 2018, the  
11 number of Washington jobs requiring postsecondary education will  
12 increase by two hundred fifty-nine thousand. The legislature finds  
13 that while Washington enterprises that rely on highly educated workers  
14 have been able to fill positions from within the state and by  
15 attracting workers from other states or nations, businesses located in  
16 states that fail to produce sufficient numbers of degreed workers will  
17 be at a competitive disadvantage, since these employers will incur the  
18 added expense of recruiting heavily in other states and countries to  
19 find their skilled workforce. Citizens of Washington will not have

1 access to the jobs Washington firms are producing unless the state  
2 dramatically increases postsecondary educational opportunities for  
3 them. The legislature further finds that increasing the numbers of  
4 Washington graduates to meet the needs of the state's citizens and  
5 businesses demands innovative institutions and educational delivery  
6 systems.

7 The legislature intends to partner with Western Governors  
8 University, a regionally and nationally accredited nonprofit and  
9 independent university, to establish Western Governors University -  
10 Washington. Western Governors University would offer online,  
11 competency-based degrees and provide enhanced access to postsecondary  
12 education for all Washington students, including dislocated workers and  
13 placebound students. The legislature further intends that the  
14 institution be recognized as a Washington baccalaureate degree-granting  
15 institution that is self-supporting and does not receive state funding.  
16 It is the intent of the legislature that the higher education  
17 coordinating board, the state board for community and technical  
18 colleges, and the other institutions of higher education in Washington  
19 include the institution in policies and agreements regarding the  
20 efficient transfer of credits and courses between institutions.

21 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.76 RCW  
22 to read as follows:

- 23 (1) The board may:
- 24 (a) Recognize and endorse online, competency-based education as an  
25 important component of Washington's higher education system;
  - 26 (b) Work to eliminate unnecessary barriers to the delivery of  
27 online competency-based education by Western Governors University -  
28 Washington; and
  - 29 (c) Work with Western Governors University - Washington, as  
30 appropriate, to integrate its academic programs and services into  
31 Washington higher education policy and strategy.

32 (2) The board shall work with Western Governors University -  
33 Washington to create data-sharing processes to assess the institution's  
34 performance and determine the extent to which it helps the state  
35 achieve the goals of the current statewide strategic master plan for  
36 higher education.

1           (3) The board shall adopt rules and policies to implement this  
2 section and that require board consultation and approval before:

3           (a) Modifications of contractual terms or relationships between the  
4 state and the institution of higher education; or

5           (b) Changes or modifications in the nonprofit status of the  
6 institution of higher education.

--- END ---