

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2736

As Reported by House Committee On: State Government

Title: An act relating to encouraging the governor to prioritize gender equality when making appointments and reappointments to state boards, commissions, and councils.

Brief Description: Encouraging the governor to prioritize gender equality when making appointments and reappointments to state boards, commissions, and councils.

Sponsors: Representatives Frame, Moscoso, S. Hunt, Walkinshaw, Hudgins, Ortiz-Self, Stanford, Kagi, Senn, Jinkins, Sawyer, Fey, Gregerson and Kilduff.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government: 1/28/16, 2/3/16 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Encourages the Governor to prioritize gender equality in gubernatorial appointments and reappointments to state boards, commissions, councils, and similar entities.
- Requires the Governor to report on progress made toward the goal of 50 percent female membership for state boards, commissions, councils, and similar entities by December 1, 2018.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives S. Hunt, Chair; Bergquist, Vice Chair; Frame and Moscoso.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Holy, Ranking Minority Member; Van Werven, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Hawkins.

Staff: Dawn Eychaner (786-7135).

Background:

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.

The Governor serves as the appointing authority for more than 200 state boards and commissions. Citizens wishing to serve on a governor-appointed body submit a resume and application containing information regarding education, employment, and civic service experience to the Governor's Boards and Commissions Office. While not required, personal information such as gender, date of birth, voter registration status, race, and disability status is requested as part of the application. Applications submitted for gubernatorial appointments are subject to public disclosure.

Summary of Bill:

The Governor is encouraged to prioritize gender equality when making appointments and reappointments to state boards, commissions, councils, or similar entities. By December 1, 2018, the Governor must report to the Legislature on progress made towards the goal of 50 percent female membership on boards, commissions, councils, and similar entities for which the Governor is the appointing authority.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Part of the Legislature's job is to build up representative government and gender equality is part of that. Boards and commissions are a pipeline for future public service in elected office. Women in leadership tend to be more collaborative and take different approaches to problem solving. We don't currently have good data on the gender representation for state boards and commissions. Measuring gender representation reflects its importance and this bill brings attention to the issue. Changing the gender makeup of boards can change how we perceive professions that are traditionally dominated by one gender or the other. The National Organization for Women Washington Chapter would like to see the bill be more directive to the Governor, rather than just encouraging the Governor to prioritize gender equality when making appointments. This bill represents progress, but there is still room for improvement.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) Directing the Governor to prioritize gender could create an issue for some professions that struggle to get qualified candidates for certain boards. The Washington Chiropractic Association would like to see a carve out exempting health professions.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Frame, prime sponsor; Mary Clogston, National Organization for Women Washington Chapter; and Ann Simons, Center for Women and Democracy.

(Other) Lori Grassi, Washington Chiropractic Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.