

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5433

As Reported by House Committee On:
Community Development, Housing & Tribal Affairs

Title: An act relating to teaching Washington's tribal history, culture, and government in the common schools.

Brief Description: Requiring Washington's tribal history, culture, and government to be taught in the common schools.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Litzow, Rolfes, Roach, Fain, Hasegawa, Dammeier, McCoy, Nelson, Frockt, McAuliffe, Rivers, Kohl-Welles, Chase, Jayapal, Conway and Habib).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Community Development, Housing & Tribal Affairs: 3/23/15 [DP].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires, rather than encourages, school districts to incorporate the history, culture, and government of the nearest federally recognized Indian tribe(s) into the social studies curriculum.
- Requires schools to use curriculum developed by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, HOUSING & TRIBAL AFFAIRS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Appleton, Chair; Robinson, Vice Chair; Johnson, Ranking Minority Member; Zeiger, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Hawkins, Moscoso and Sawyer.

Staff: Kirsten Lee (786-7133).

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.

There are currently 29 federally recognized Indian tribes whose reservations are located in Washington.

In 2005 legislation was enacted encouraging the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to help school districts identify federally recognized Indian tribes within or near the districts. Further, school districts were encouraged to do the following:

- incorporate curricula about tribal history, culture, and government of the nearest federally recognized tribe(s) and work with tribes to develop such curricula;
- collaborate with tribes to create materials, programs, and cultural exchanges; and
- collaborate with the OSPI on curricular areas of tribal government and history that are statewide in nature.

In 2011 legislation was enacted directing the OSPI to create the Office of Native Education (ONE). The ONE was tasked with providing assistance to school districts to meet the educational needs of American Indian and Alaska Native students. The ONE facilitates the development and implementation of curricula and instructional materials in native languages, culture, history, and the concept of tribal sovereignty, while providing assistance to districts in the acquisition of funding to develop curricula and instructional materials in conjunction with the Native language practitioners and tribal elders.

Washington's high school graduation requirements include a minimum of one-half credit of course work in Washington history and government. Courses designed to meet this requirement are encouraged to include information on the culture, history, and government of Washington Indian tribes.

Summary of Bill:

The OSPI and school districts are required, rather than encouraged, to take certain actions to develop and incorporate curricula about tribes. The OSPI must help school districts identify federally recognized Indian tribes within or near school districts. School districts must do the following:

- when reviewing or adopting social studies curriculum, incorporate curricula about the tribal history, culture, and government of the nearest federally recognized tribe(s) and work with tribes to develop such curricula;
- use curricula developed and made available free of charge by the OSPI;
- collaborate with any federally recognized Indian tribe within their district and neighboring tribes to incorporate expanded and improved curricular materials about Indian tribes and to create programs of classroom and community cultural exchanges; and
- collaborate with the OSPI on curricular areas of tribal government and history that are statewide in nature.

School districts may modify the curriculum developed and made free of charge by the OSPI to incorporate elements that have a regionally specific focus or to incorporate the curriculum into existing curricular materials.

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) This legislation has been 10 years in the making and is widely supported by many stakeholders, including the Muckleshoot, Lummi, Stillaguamish, and Umatilla tribes. The legislation is not an unfunded mandate because the curriculum is free of charge and is ready to be used

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Dylan Doty, Muckleshoot Tribe; and Steve Robinson, Lummi and Stillaguamish and Umatilla tribes.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.