

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 2551

As of February 19, 2020

Title: An act relating to permitting students to wear traditional tribal regalia and objects of cultural significance at graduation ceremonies and related events.

Brief Description: Permitting students to wear traditional tribal regalia and objects of cultural significance at graduation ceremonies and related events.

Sponsors: House Committee on State Government & Tribal Relations (originally sponsored by Representatives Lekanoff, Ramel, Rude, Leavitt, Valdez, Davis, Doglio, Walen, Pollet, Macri, Ormsby and Santos).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/12/20, 95-1.

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/21/20.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Specifies that public schools and public institutions of higher education may not prohibit students who are members of a federally recognized tribe from wearing traditional tribal regalia or objects of Native American cultural significance along with or attached to a gown at graduation ceremonies or related events.
- Directs school districts, public institutions of higher education, and, when necessary, public schools to update any relevant policies or procedures.
- Specifies that the provisions applying to school districts and public institutions apply to students in the graduating class of 2020 and subsequent classes.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Benjamin Omdal (786-7442)

Background: Policies on student dress are determined at the local or institution level. Policies on regalia, dress, and decorum for ceremonies and graduations are also set by local policies.

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.

In 2018, the superintendent of public instruction issued guidance to schools encouraging high schools to adopt policies that allow for tribal students to wear items of cultural significance during graduation ceremonies.

Summary of Bill: School districts, public schools, and institutions of higher education may not prohibit students who are members of a federally recognized tribe from wearing tribal regalia or objects of Native American cultural significance along with or attached to a gown at graduation ceremonies or related events. Districts, public schools, and public institutions may not require these students to wear a cap if it is incompatible with the regalia or significant object.

School districts, institutions of higher education, and, when necessary, public schools shall update any relevant policies or procedures accordingly.

For the purposes of the legislation, "institutions of higher education" means public four-year universities and public community and technical colleges.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.