

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5237

As of February 25, 2019

Title: An act relating to the creation of a work group to study and make recommendations on a statue to replace Marcus Whitman.

Brief Description: Creating a work group to replace certain Marcus Whitman statues.

Sponsors: Senators Carlyle, Hunt, Saldaña, Nguyen and Mullet.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: State Government, Tribal Relations & Elections: 1/30/19.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes a work group to study and make recommendations on an appropriate figure to represent Washington State in the state capitol and Statuary Hall in the United States capitol.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, TRIBAL RELATIONS & ELECTIONS

Staff: Melissa Van Gorkom (786-7491)

Background: The creation of the National Statuary Hall collection was authorized by the United States Congress in 1864 allowing each state to provide two statues of notable citizens for display in the United States capitol. Legislation enacted by the United States Congress in 2000 allows any state to request the Joint Committee on the Library of Congress to approve replacement of a statue the state has provided for display in Statuary Hall if: (1) the request has been approved by a resolution adopted by the Legislature of the state and the request has been approved by the Governor of the state, and (2) the statue to be replaced has been displayed in the capitol of the United States for at least ten years. The resolution must:

- identify the statue to be replaced;
- name the individual to be newly commemorated and cite the individual's qualifications;
- select a committee or commission to represent the state in selecting the sculptor; and
- direct the method of obtaining the necessary funds to carry the resolution into effect.

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 Joint Committee on the Library of Congress has oversight of the collection, and, under the committee's direction, the Architect of the Capitol (AOC) is responsible for the reception, placement, and care of the statues. In order to carry out the replacement of a statue in Statuary Hall, the state must enter into an agreement with AOC that the state will:

- follow AOC guidelines for designing and fabricating the statue; and
- pay any costs related to replacement, including costs in connection with designing, constructing, transporting, and placing the new statue; removing and transporting the statue being replaced; and any unveiling ceremony.

Summary of Bill: A work group is established to study and make recommendations on an appropriate figure to represent Washington State in the state capitol and Statuary Hall in the United States capitol. Work group members include:

- the director of the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, who serves as the chair of the workgroup;
- four legislative members, one member from each of the four major caucuses;
- the director of the Washington State Historical Society;
- the director of the Department of Enterprise Services;
- a representative from the Capitol Campus Design Advisory Committee;
- a representative from the Legacy Washington Program; and
- four representatives from the public appointed by the Governor.

The workgroup must conduct a statewide tour to include at least five meetings with at least two meetings on the east side of the Cascades to review Washington State history. By November 1, 2019, the work group must report to the the appropriate committees of the Legislature on anticipated costs and funding sources that may be available for replacing the statue and recommendations for:

- three individuals worthy of representing Washington State and their qualifications;
- a committee or commission to represent the state to select a sculptor for the new statue; and
- a location for the replaced Marcus Whitman statue from Statuary Hall.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: Yes.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: There is a need to have a civic dialog about who should represent our state with this highest honor. Washington has gone through an enormous transition since 1889. Whitman played an instrumental role in the founding of our state and made great contributions to the state. There is recognition of his contributions across the state. The state has a right to evolve, change and reflect. There are so many civic leaders who have impacted our state. Having a group of civic leaders travel the state and engage in a healthy discourse about Washington history in a holistic and meaningful way to determine who should receive this honor brings out the best in our democracy. Society is

changing and there is a lot of benefit in having that discourse in where we want to go in the years ahead.

CON: Fort Walla Walla is passionate about our history in eastern Washington, Idaho and Oregon and have quite a few presenters that cover this span in history. Whitman was the only doctor in the Washington territory and was viewed as a place to get if settlers could make it to the Whitman mission, they could make it to Oregon. Whitman was killed in trying to stem a measles outbreak that had impacted the settlers and natives in the area. He was decidedly not a racist and did not bring the disease to the state. He came from an abolitionist background and helped everyone. He is one of the cleanest people in terms of background that we have places named after in our state. This bill presumes to already remove Marcus Whitman by forming a work group to replace him. The public should have some input.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Reuven Carlyle, Prime Sponsor.

CON: Charles Saranto, citizen; Rowland Thompson, citizen.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.