

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6607

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Early Learning & K-12 Education, February 7, 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: Senators Billig, Holy, McCoy, Zeiger, Salomon, King, Hunt, Wellman, Conway, Keiser, Kuderer, Saldaña, Stanford, Wilson, C. and Sheldon.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/29/20, 2/07/20 [DP, DNP, w/oRec].

Brief Summary of Bill

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

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Wellman, Chair; Wilson, C., Vice Chair; Holy, Hunt, McCoy, Mullet, Padden, Pedersen and Salomon.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Wagoner.

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.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Hawkins, Ranking Member.

Staff: Benjamin Omdal (786-7442)

Background: Generally, policies on student dress are determined at the local level. In addition, policies on regalia, dress, and decorum for ceremonies and graduations are also set by local policies.

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 from wearing tribal regalia or objects of Native American cultural significance as adornments at graduation ceremonies or related events. 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, "adornment" means an item attached to or worn with, but not replacing the cap and gown customarily worn at graduation ceremonies.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The bill would expressly allow tribal members to incorporate their culture into a meaningful ceremony in their lives. Some districts and schools have not allowed for the wearing of regalia over the years. Passing this bill will get the attention of districts who have disallowed this practice in the past. Being able to see cultures reflected in a graduation ceremony is powerful.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Laura Lynn, OSPI; Senator Lisa Wellman; Senator John McCoy; Senator Claire Wilson.

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