HOUSE BILL REPORT
SSB 5825

As Passed House:
March 3, 2026

Title: An act relating to authorizing the Washington state leadership board to solicit gifts, grants, and endowments from public or private sources.

Brief Description: Authorizing the Washington state leadership board to solicit gifts, grants, and endowments from public or private sources.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on State Government, Tribal Affairs & Elections (originally sponsored by Senators Wilson, C., Warnick, Dozier, Krishnadasan, Lovelett, Nobles, Riccelli, Shewmake and Wellman; by request of Washington State Leadership Board).

Brief History:
Committee Activity:
State Government & Tribal Relations: 2/20/26, 2/25/26 [DP].
Floor Activity:
Passed House: 3/3/26, 85-8.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Authorizes the Washington State Leadership Board (WSLB) to solicit gifts, grants, and endowments for the use or benefit of the WSLB.
- Removes references to the WSLB's expired sports mentoring program.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & TRIBAL RELATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Mena, Chair; Stearns, Vice Chair; Waters, Ranking Minority Member; Chase, Doglio and Farivar.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Walsh, Assistant Ranking Minority Member.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Staff: Connor Schiff (786-7093).

Background:

The Washington State Leadership Board (WSLB), formerly the Association of Washington Generals, was first established in 1971 to provide the state a means of extending formal recognition of an individual's service to the state. The WSLB also administers the following programs to expand educational, sports, leadership, and employment opportunities for youth, veterans, and people with disabilities:

- the Washington World Fellows Program;
- Boundless Washington; and
- Compassion Scholars.

The WSLB is governed by a board of directors. The Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, the Secretary of State, and four legislative members appointed by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House serve on the board of directors as ex officio members. The WSLB may designate other officers and members as members of the board. The board of directors adopts bylaws and establishes governance and transparency policies for the WSLB. In 2022 legislation was enacted that designates the WSLB as a trustee for the state.

The Washington World Fellows Program. The Washington World Fellows Program is a foreign exchange and career preparatory fellowship for high school sophomores. The Washington World Fellows Program provides access to academic, travel, and leadership opportunities for fellows and is administered at no cost to students and their families.

Boundless Washington. Boundless Washington is a grant-based outdoor and sports program for high school students with disabilities. Boundless Washington grants may be used to cover lessons, adaptive equipment, travel, and other costs for a sport or activity of the grantee's choosing. Grantees also take part in the WSLB Leadership Development Curriculum, which is focused on building skills in advocacy, communication, and leadership.

Compassion Scholars. Compassion Scholars is an experiential travel and service-learning program that pairs high school students with mentors who serve as models of compassionate leadership. After travelling abroad, program participants work with their mentors to implement a service project in their communities.

Sports Mentoring. In 2018 legislation established a sports mentoring program to be administered by the WSLB in collaboration with the Lieutenant Governor's Office. The program encouraged underserved youth to join or participate in sports. The stated goals of the program were to support youth in building self-confidence, developing skills in the areas of goal setting and collaboration, promoting a healthy lifestyle through forming positive relationships with peers and family, avoiding risky or delinquent behavior, and achieving educational success. The sports mentoring program expired November 1, 2025.

Special License Plate Funding.
The WSLB and its programs are funded in part from the proceeds of certain special license plates. This funding includes:

- 25 percent of proceeds from the Seattle Seahawks special license plate for the purpose of administering the Washington World Fellows Program;
- 25 percent of proceeds from the Seattle National Hockey League special license plate for the purpose of administering Boundless Washington;
- up to 25 percent of proceeds from the Seattle Mariners special license plate for the purpose of administering the Washington World Fellows Program;
- up to 30 percent, but not to exceed $40,000, from the Seattle Sounders Football Club special license plate, for the purpose of developing educational, veterans, international relations, and civics projects and to recognize the outstanding public service of individuals or groups; and
- all but $25,000 per year of the net proceeds from the Seattle Storm special license plate for the purpose of providing grants to support and enhance athletic, recreational, and other opportunities for women and girls, and especially those with disabilities.

Summary of Bill:

The Washington State Leadership Board (WSLB) is authorized to solicit gifts, grants, and endowments from public or private sources that are made for the use or benefit of the WSLB. The WSLB may expend such funds or any income according to the WSLB's terms and purpose, which include advancing the WSLB's mission to cultivate leadership skills in Washington youth and to strengthen civic engagement, education, and service opportunities.

Funds received from private sources may not be applied to reduce or substitute the WSLB's budget as appropriated by the Legislature. These funds must be applied to projects, programs, and functions that are not funded by the Legislature. The Executive Director of the WSLB must regularly report on funds received from private sources to the Office of Financial Management.

References and reporting requirements related to the expired sports mentoring program are removed.

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) There is power in investing in the state's youth early. The Washington State Leadership Board (WSLB) programs offer a transformative experience. Washington youth are able to step into the programs and see leadership as a responsibility and an opportunity. Participants learn how to make a difference in their communities. Access to these programs provides participants with mentorship, community, and self-belief. These programs cultivate a leadership forum for future leaders. The WSLB has a goal to reach the final regions of the state this year. This bill provides structural support to the future of these programs and ensures that opportunities remain possible during the current challenging fiscal situation. Other commissions already have the authority to solicit gifts and grants.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Olivia Sarriugarte, Volunteer Board Member, Washington State Leadership Board; Laura Armstrong, Washington State Leadership Board; and Brian Moreno, Washington State Leadership Board.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.