SENATE BILL REPORT
SB 5523

As of February 2, 2025

Title: An act relating to the role of students on the governing boards of institutions of higher education.

Brief Description: Concerning the role of students on the governing boards of institutions of higher education.

Sponsors: Senators Riccelli, Lovelett, Slatter, Nobles, Kauffman, Warnick, Trudeau, Hasegawa, Saldaña, Valdez, Wellman and Wilson, C..

Brief History:
Committee Activity: Higher Education & Workforce Development: 2/03/25.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires all boards of trustees serving a community and technical college district to have a student trustee.
- Requires an opportunity at each regular board of trustees meeting for a student government representative to provide a report.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Staff: Kellee Gunn (786-7429)

Background: Community and Technical Colleges' Boards of Trustees. There are 34 community and technical colleges (CTCs) in Washington State, in 30 college districts. Each district is governed by a Governor-appointed board of trustees. Each CTC district must have five trustees, except for those boards of trustees who have six because they voted to establish a student trustee.

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.

Each board of trustees shall organize itself by electing a chair from its members. Three members constitutes a quorum, and no action shall be taken by less than a majority of the trustees of the board of trustees.

A trustee's term begins Octobers 1st of the year they are appointed, and a term is for five years. Trustees must be a resident and qualified elector of the college district. A trustee cannot be an employee of the CTC college system, a member of the board of directors of any school district, or a member of the governing board of any public or private educational institution.

Student Trustees. A student trustee's term is one year, and begins July 1st and ends June 30th of the year they are appointed. The student must be in good standing with the college. If the student trustee fails to be enrolled at the college full-time or forfeits their academic standing, they are disqualified and a new student trustee must be appointed. A student trustee must not participate or vote on matters relating to the hiring, discipline, tenure of faculty members and personnel, or any other matters pertaining to collective bargaining agreements.

Power and Duties. Boards of trustees have a number of powers and duties including operating the college, employing the college president, establishing new facilities, borrowing money, and issuing and selling bonds with approval of the State Board for CTCs, establishing fees, granting degrees, and making decisions on housing facilities, among others.

Public Baccalaureate Institutions. There are six public baccalaureate institutions in Washington State: University of Washington, Washington State University, Central Washington University, Western Washington University, Eastern Washington University, and The Evergreen State College.

Summary of Bill: All CTC boards of trustees must have a student trustee. For a vote to be constituted a quorum, there must a majority of trustees present.

A student government representative at the CTCs and the public baccalaureates shall be given an opportunity to provide an in-person report at each regular board of trustees meeting.

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.