SENATE BILL REPORT
SB 5825

As of January 13, 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: 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 Affairs & Elections: 1/13/26.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes the Washington State Leadership Board to solicit gifts, grants, and endowments.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, TRIBAL AFFAIRS & ELECTIONS

Staff: Danielle Creech (786-7412)

Background: Washington State Leadership Board. The Washington State Leadership Board (WSLB), formerly the Association of Washington Generals, is a service organization formed in 1970 by Lieutenant Governor John Cherberg. In 2022, the state Legislature designated the WSLB a trustee agency of the state of Washington. The purpose of the WSLB is to provide leadership opportunities for youth, veterans, and people with disabilities; recognizing outstanding service to the state; and bringing individuals together to serve as ambassadors of trade, tourism, and international goodwill. The WSLB may conduct activities in support of their mission.

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.

The WSLB is governed by a board of directors. The Governor, Lieutenant Governor, 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 non-voting members. The board of directors adopts bylaws and establishes governance and transparency policies for the WSLB.

The WSLB receives some funding from the proceeds of special license plates as follows:

- 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; and
- 25 percent of the proceeds of the Seattle Sounders Football Club special license plate.

Funds received from special license plates must be deposited into the WSLB Special License Plate Account. The WSLB Special License Plate Account may accept gifts, grants, or endowments made from public and private sources.

Office of the Lieutenant Governor. The Office of the Lieutenant Governor (LTG) may provide technical and financial assistance for the WSLB where the work of the board aligns with the mission of the LTG. This includes, but may not be limited to Boundless Washington and the Washington World Fellows Program.

Boundless Washington. Boundless Washington is an outdoor leadership program for young people with disabilities. Under the statute, Boundless Washington will satisfy the terms of the sports mentoring program if approved by the board. Twenty-five percent of the proceeds from the Seattle NHL Hockey special license plate goes to the WSLB Special License Plate Account solely to administer the program to facilitate opportunities for young people with physical and sensory disabilities to enjoy and experience the outdoors.

Washington World Fellows Program. The Washington World Fellows program is a college readiness and study abroad fellowship administered by the LTG in collaboration with the WSLB. Twenty-five percent of the proceeds from the Seattle Seahawks special license plate goes to the WSLB Special License Plate Account solely to administer the program. At least 90 percent of the amounts received must be provided as fellowships under the program.

The Lieutenant Governor may assist the WSLB with the compilation of a yearly financial report, which must be made available to the Legislature by January 15th of each year, detailing the revenues and expenditures associated with the Washington World Fellows and Sports Mentoring programs. The LTG must post on its website detailed information on all revenues and expenditures of the WSLB.

Summary of Bill: The 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. Funds received from gifts, grants, or endowments may be expended by the WSLB according to statute,

including but not limited to advancing the mission to cultivate leadership skills in Washington State youth and strengthen statewide civic engagement. Funds received from private sources through gifts, grants, or endowments must not be used to reduce or substitute for the WSLB's budget as appropriated by the Legislature. The funds must be used towards projects, programs, and functions as authorized by statute but not funded by the Legislature.

The executive director of the WSLB must report such funds received from private sources to the Office of Financial Management on a regular basis.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 12, 2026.

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 state leadership board offers free, equity-focused leadership programs that help Washington high school aged youth build skills, gain experiences, and help make an impact on the world. These programs connect young people with mentors and real-world global learning opportunities across our state and beyond. They can do service learning, travel internationally, and meet others who share a passion for the same things that they do as far as making a difference in our world. At a time that we are talking about reducing budgets, it puts these boards and commissions in a position where they cannot refill those budgets to continue the programs. The language in the bill is the same as the language in a bill the committee passed granting the Women's Commission the ability to solicit funds. This bill gives the leadership board the clear statutory authority it needs to expand its dollars and continue doing the work that Washingtonians count on. We must invest in programs that support student growth and inspired service, so every aspiring leader can make a meaningful impact. A student in Yakima has addressed financial aid gaps at their school and developed outreach plans, while a student in Ellensburg has organized culturally relevant food drives. Another student in Okanagan created mental health workshops with mental health providers. These examples showcase just a portion of the remarkable leadership demonstrated by these students. 86 percent of Washington's legislative districts have been served through these programs since 2018 and the board seeks to obtain a goal of 100 percent in the coming years. This bill helps ensure that these mentorships and leadership development opportunities remain possible for Washington's future leaders across the state.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Claire Wilson, Prime Sponsor; Laura Laura Armstrong, Washington State Leadership Board; Colin Pierce, Board member, on behalf of WSLB; Cynthia Tamayo, Board member, on behalf of WSLB.

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