
SENATE BILL 5608

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2025 Regular Session

By Senators Warnick, Hasegawa, and Holy

Read first time 01/31/25. Referred to Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Development.

1 AN ACT Relating to adopting free speech policy statements at
2 public institutions of higher education; adding a new section to
3 chapter 28B.10 RCW; and creating a new section.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that freedom of
6 expression principles are required for a free society. Recently,
7 controversial speech has been met, not with competing ideas, but with
8 attempts to silence the speakers. The legislature agrees with Justice
9 Brandeis that "the remedy to be applied is more speech, not enforced
10 silence," and with Justice Kennedy that "the remedy for speech that
11 is false is speech that is true." The legislature further finds that
12 the greatest breeding ground for the principles of freedom of
13 expression are our institutions of higher education. Therefore, in
14 order to promote and protect principles of freedom of expression, the
15 legislature intends to require its institutions of higher education
16 to adopt the Chicago principles as presented by the University of
17 Chicago's committee on freedom of expression.

18 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.10
19 RCW to read as follows:

1 The boards of regents of the state universities, the boards of
2 trustees of the regional universities, The Evergreen State College,
3 and the boards of trustees of each community and technical college
4 district, in collaboration with faculty and students, shall each
5 adopt a free speech policy statement. This free speech policy
6 statement must articulate certain principles that the institution
7 will uphold, comparable to the Chicago principles or Chicago
8 statement. The statement must include, at a minimum, a commitment to:

- 9 (1) Promote and protect free and open inquiry;
10 (2) Promote and protect a completely free and open discussion of
11 ideas that maintains a climate of mutual respect;
12 (3) Promote and protect the principle of debate or deliberation
13 without judgment by the institution; and
14 (4) Act in conformity with the principle of free expression and
15 not obstruct or otherwise interfere with the freedom of others to
16 express views they reject.

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