

LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS



Develop Teacher/Classroom Criteria when Working with ELL Students.

Background

HB 2607 gives PESB the authority to form a think-tank that involves educators from different levels and organizations to come together to discuss and recommend changes that can be implemented in classrooms and thus meet the needs of our English language learners.

Specific Issues

The immigrant population of Washington State is increasing. In a study published by the Washington Institute for Public Policy in January 2007, between 1990 and 2000, there was a 67% increase in school age children. This included a 113% increase at the Middle and High School levels. Many of these children struggle with the English language. Unfortunately, countless immigrant students enter school with a weak foundation for learning a second language. They may also have difficulties working at age appropriate levels in required subjects even when taught in their native language.

OSPI has identified 6 categories which affect a student's success on the WASL. Of these six, Classroom instruction, Curriculum alignment and Extra Assistance have a direct impact on our ELL students' ability to perform in the classroom. OSPI also stated that 10% of all 10th graders taking the WASL were of Hispanic origin. Of these students, only 28% passed all three categories of the WASL. 2.3% were considered Migrant with only 17% passing all three categories.

Scope of the Bill

There is a need for improving the ability of our schools to teach language as well as academic content to our ELL students. Creating curriculum at the college level as well as a continuing education program for our teachers will allow them the opportunity to create a learning environment that will bring success to all in the classroom. This bill is a good compliment to ESL programs already in use at the schools.

Microsoft Office Word 2003 (2).Ink

Primary Sponsor:
Senators Santos,
Hasegwa, Ormsby,
Anderson, Lantz,
Hudgins,
Uptegrove,
Sullivan, Chase,
Darneille, and
Simpson

According to the Washington Institute for Public Policy, 16000 Washington State high school students are not proficient in the English language.

The gap between statewide and ELL student WASL met-standard rates has increased over the past 5 years in all subjects.

The people of the State of Washington have tasked the Commission on Hispanic Affairs with advising the Governor, the Legislature, and state and local agencies on issues that affect the Latino community of the State.

Legislative Testimony in HB2607, prepared by Susan Jones

Created on 1/31/2008

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LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS



Relating to Criminal Street Gangs

Background

HB 2712 provides funding to Law Enforcement and the Department of Social and Health Services to implement five pilot projects for the Prevention, Intervention and Suppressing of gang related violence in communities where it has become an increasing problem/where addressing the impact of gangs in their community is of high importance.

The commission supports most of the concepts of this bill; however, we have some concerns with the section on Civil Injunctions. We encourage additional language be written to make the injunctions more specific so as to prevent racial profiling and harassment of ethnic communities by law enforcement agencies. We also encourage that language be added to the bill that requires law enforcement agencies receiving the grants to substantiate that they have developed community partnerships.

Specific Issues

Gang violence is an indisputable issue in our state. Our children are becoming involved with gangs as early as 12 yrs. old. This is unquestionably not a Latino or an African-American problem. These kids come from all walks of life with many being girls. According to groups such as the Seattle Social Development Project, the reasons for joining a gang can be explained as being the next step one takes as a delinquent youth as well as its association with dropping out of school, teen parenthood and unstable employment. But this isn't just a youth problem. Adults in their 20's, 30's and even 40's may account for a significant proportion of gangs. We need to see changes made that will justifiably punish those adults who recruit and entice our youth to join in gang activity.

We need to focus our time and energy in emphasizing a cooperative educational program to keep our children out of gangs. Law Enforcement not only needs to implement measures to address the problems related to gang violence today, but they also need to work with community leaders and schools to identify our at-risk youth and provide them with the tools needed to prevent them from becoming a gang member. If we recognize the value of sharing information from different entities within our communities, we will be able to better understand the problems and find solutions that involve gang issues.

Scope of the Bill

The objective of HB2712 is to promote community safety from gang activity and violence. This bill gives our communities the opportunity and resources to come together as a collective group and implement pilot programs designed to deal with the issue of gang violence through prevention, intervention and suppression. It will create a statewide, informational sharing database for law enforcement and expands on the list of illustrative aggravating factors to the Sentencing Reform Act. It will also provide for local graffiti and tagging abatement programs.

Primary Sponsors:
Representative
Hurst, Ross,
Dickerson,
Newhouse,
Conway, Morrell,
Roach, Kelley and
Ormsby.

We must address the personal, family and community factors that cause young people to choose gangs over more productive alternatives. The more success we have in prevention, the fewer people we'll have to prosecute for violent activities down the road. - U.S. Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales
-2006

Gang members are youth for whom everything has gone wrong. -Terrance Thornberry

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Legislative Testimony in HB2712 by Susan Jones

Created on 1/31/2008

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LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS



Providing Additional Opportunities to Assist Students who have not Completed all Graduation Requirements

Background

HB 2808 directs OSPI to create a training program that will enhance counseling; targeted at students who have completed graduation academic requirements but have not passed the Washington State Assessment of Student Learning. Provision of grants, should funds be appropriated, shall also be made to school districts for High School Plus programs that include enhanced counseling and learning opportunities that will assist targeted students complete a diploma.

Specific Issues

The Washington State Institute of Public Policy identified several characteristics which play a part in why our 10th graders did not pass the WASL in 2006. That school year, 42.5% of 10th graders taking the WASL shared characteristics that included; being a minority, poverty, non-English speaker, disabled, special education, or had a parent without a diploma. Of these students, only 25% passed the met standard in reading and writing.

10% of students who participated in the WASL were Hispanic. Of these students, 68% met standards in Reading while 66% met standards in Writing and 29% met standards in Math. These scores were the lowest of all ethnic groups. In comparing, Yakima School District's 2006 WASL scores, where Hispanics make up 60% of student population, to a statewide 14%, you can see that Yakima is much lower than the statewide average.

	<u>Math</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Writing</u>
Statewide:	50.4	80.8	83.9
Yakima:	28	66.3	69.5

This statistic alone illustrates the need for additional programs that address issues regarding WASL standards.

Scope of the Bill

Our current met standard assessment scores for Hispanic students are not acceptable. Providing students with the necessary tools to pass the WASL and acquire their diploma is what basic education is about. This bill will provide school districts with information and grant monies to provide educational staff that will identify and work with students in their pursuit of receiving a high school diploma. The creation of High School Plus Programs will enable our students to achieve this goal using methods conducive to their needs and abilities.

Primary Sponsor:
Representatives Sullivan, Upthegrove, Quall, Liias, Priest, Green, Conway, Pedersen, Kenney, Hudgins, Santos, Kelley, and Ormsby.

On Time Graduation rate for Hispanic students is 54%. (OSPI)

36.4% of students taking the WASL had a GPA below 2.5. One fourth of these students met the standard.

The people of the State of Washington have tasked the Commission on Hispanic Affairs with advising the Governor, the Legislature, and state and local agencies on issues that affect the Latino community of the State.

Legislative Testimony on HB 2808 prepared by Susan Jones

Created on 2/8/2008 2:25:00 PM

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LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS



Relating to helping School Districts with high Concentration of English Language Learner Students.

Background

HB 2810 Will provide enhanced resources and assistance to school districts with higher concentrations of English Language Learners. This includes schools with more than 20% student enrollment in the Transitional bilingual Program and more than 40% of students eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch.

Specific Issues

Spanish speaking students make up the largest foreign language group in our state's schools and have the lowest scores relating to the WASL. 53% met the standard in reading, 49% in writing and 17% in math. According to OSPI, during 2006-07 school year, 558 migrant 10th graders took the reading portion of the WASL. Of these students, 199 met the standard. 569 migrant students took the writing portion, with 180 meeting the standard. There are differences in language and communication styles between cultures. Some of the immigrant participants come from countries where teachers are more authoritarian than they are in the United States, and learning is not seen as a participatory process. Our educators' have to identify and understand the educational differences of students. School districts need to provide a means of learning for students who may be unfamiliar with the standard method of teaching in our state.

Scope of the Bill

HB 2810 will provide added resources and assistance to school districts with a high percentage of students in need of increasing their WASL score. We need to create programs that will help students in a manor that is advantageous to their learning environment. It is important for each student enrolled in Washington's public schools to be given the opportunity to succeed and earn a high school diploma.

Primary Sponsors:
Representatives
Sullivan, Quall,
Uptegrove,
Anderson. Conway,
Kenney, Haigh,
Hudgins, Santos,
Simpson, and
Ormsby.

Spanish speaking students make up 4.4% of all high school students.

Latinos have improved little in their SAT performance in the past ten years.

The people of the State of Washington have tasked the Commission on Hispanic Affairs with advising the Governor, the Legislature, and state and local agencies on issues that affect the Latino community of the State.

Legislative Testimony in HB 2810, prepared by Susan Jones

Created on 2/14/2008

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LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS



Creating future bilingual teacher and training programs

Background

HB 2303 will create future bilingual educator mentoring and training programs in Washington State schools.

Specific Issues

All students deserve to have the opportunity to achieve at a high level. Few Americans realize that the U.S. educational system is one of the most unequal in the industrialized world, and students routinely receive dramatically different learning opportunities based on their cultural, social, and economic status. The most effective method to develop a sufficient amount of bilingual teachers is to have current teachers who are bilingual and have bicultural skills train and invest in ethnic students in Washington State schools who already possess the knowledge of two languages and who are seeking a college education in the future.

Scope of the Bill

The teacher mentoring and training program will help develop a pilot program to prepare and mentor high school students who will become bilingual teachers in the future. The linguistic and ethnic diversity of schools across the country are increasing, but the number of bilingual educators and teachers of color is on the decline. How can schools support, encourage, and retain bilingual and minority teachers Washington State schools? By making a cultural transformation within the institution, in which multiculturalism and diversity become not just values, but priorities. Faculty diversity needs to be seen as crucial to the multicultural school environment. All students need to see successful adults from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds represented on the school staff. Students and teachers should also see that their home culture and language are valued at school. This bill will provide awareness of the growing need of more bilingual teachers and through the mentoring program generate more multicultural and bilingual students who would like to pursue a teaching degree.

Primary Sponsor:
Rep. Zack Hudgins

One-third of teachers lack college preparation in the main subject areas they teach. (NCES)

Only one-fifth of teachers serving the state's 87,000 bilingual students have a bilingual teaching endorsement. (OSPI)

According to OSPI, more than 90% of teachers and administrators are Caucasian, and in some school districts the Hispanic student population is over 50%.

U.S. schools will need to fill approximately two million vacancies in the next decade, with the highest demands in "perennially hard-to-staff" urban schools, and in subject areas such as bilingual education, special education, math, and science (Geringer, 2000)

The people of the State of Washington have tasked the Commission on Hispanic Affairs with advising the Governor, the Legislature, and state and local agencies on issues that affect the Latino community of the State.

Legislative Testimony HB 2303 by Donald Barker

Created on 2/19/2008 11:54:00 AM

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LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS



Expanding financial literacy through education and counseling to promote greater homeownership security.

Background

HB2829 will expand financial literacy through education and counseling and thus promote greater homeownership security; adding new sections to chapter 43.320 RCW; making appropriations; and declaring an emergency.

Every person deserves high-quality, affordable housing, and the dream of homeownership should be within anyone's reach. Planning for a home takes time, and it begins with a solid foundation of financial literacy. Financial education is important during all stages of life, and especially for our young people, because economic opportunity establishes the groundwork for enduring success.

Specific Issues

Hispanics comprise one of the fastest growing minority population in Washington State and the nation. The state's Hispanic population is estimated at 551,371; comprising roughly 11% of the entire State's population according to data released by the U.S. Census. Financial literacy is an excellent means of teaching consumers about the benefits of having a relationship with a financial institution. Among these are; profitable access to funds and credit, the ability to establish a positive financial history, consumer protection and perhaps most important, a higher propensity towards savings, which will surely increase net worth. Financial literacy can also break the cycle of poverty, which is often associated with the inexperienced and minorities. Individuals who have experience handling a bank account and an awareness of other effective money management/asset building techniques are more likely to pass this knowledge to their children.

Scope of the Bill

Financial education should be mandatory in all school's curriculum and there should be state mandated programs to help facilitate potential home buyers. Financial literacy should begin at the earliest stages of life to deter predatory homebuyer practices and give minorities an awareness of financial programs in order to afford, buy, and keep their homes. This bill is essential for the preservation and equality of homeownership in Washington State.

The people of the State of Washington have tasked the Commission on Hispanic Affairs with advising the Governor, the Legislature, and state and local agencies on issues that affect the Latino community of the State.

Primary Sponsor:
Rep. Kelley,
Williams, Eddy,
Rolfes, Lantz, Liias,
Linville,
Upthegrove, Green,
Anderson, Nelson,
Morrell, Fromhold,
Kenney, Darneille,
MacIntire, Kirby,
Haigh, Simpson,
Hasegawa, O'Brien,
Ornsby

Sixty-six percent of households in the state are homeowners. Washington State ranks near the bottom -- 43rd out of 50 -- in homeownership rates nationwide, according to the 2004 Census. (homeownership-wa.gov)

Washington State is ranked 23rd in the U.S in foreclosure rate Washington state ranks near the bottom -- 43rd out of 50 -- in homeownership rates nationwide, according to the 2004 Census. Washington ranked 47th among states for delinquencies and 49th in foreclosures. (Seattlepi.com)

LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS



Practice of Dentistry

Background

HB 2881 will amend the following to allow an applicant who holds a valid license and currently engaged in practice in another state may be granted a license without examination required by this chapter, on the payment of any required fees, if the applicant is a graduate of a dental college, school, or dental department of an institution approved by the commission under **RCW18.32.040** (1) or if the dentist has practiced in another state for at least three years.

Specific Issues

Currently **RCW 18.32.215** excludes dentists who are fully licensed and practicing in other states, but received their education outside the U.S. There are thousands of dentists, many who are natives of Latin America, who are currently licensed and practicing in other states but are unable to obtain a license in WA. There are fewer than 50 Spanish-speaking general dentists in WA. Mexican Americans have the highest rate of dental decay and have the highest rates of any ethnic group of never visiting a dentist. **HB 2881** would allow dentists to be eligible for licensure regardless of where they completed their education.

Scope of the Bill

The approval of the bill will increase the number of dentists in WA with no additional costs and also nearly all dentists who would become eligible to apply for a license in WA under this amendment are ethnic minorities and native Spanish-speakers

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Primary Sponsor: Rep. Bill Hinkle

A University of Washington study was cited in 2001 as indicating that a number of occupational areas, including health care, are facing significant retirements in our state. 66% of dentists surveyed were older than 45 years and 50% of the full-time general dentists planned to retire by 2013. (Washington State Dental Association Survey of Dentists)

In the past 6 years the WA state population grew by 31%, but the number of practicing dentists in the state only grew by 4% (Census.gov and DQAC)

The majority of counties in WA (35/39) are federally designated dental health care professional shortage areas. (Office of Community and Rural Health)

LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

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Protecting Consumers by regulating loans

Background

SB 6471 will protect consumers by regulating loans under the consumer loan act and mortgage broker practices act.

Specific Issues

The extension of high-rate, high-fee loans to people considered to be high-risk borrowers has grown substantially in recent years. Unfortunately, fraudulent and abusive lending practices have also grown. High-cost lending is not limited to home mortgages. Check cashing outlets, payday loan companies, rent-to-own stores, sub prime auto lenders, and pawn shops are additional examples of high-cost lenders. The federal Truth in Lending Act was originally enacted by Congress in 1968 as a part of the Consumer Protection Act. The law is designed to protect consumers in credit transactions by requiring clear disclosure of key terms of the lending arrangement as well as all costs. The Truth In Lending Act is also designed to reduce confusion among consumers resulting from the different methods of computing interest and to prevent fraud, deception, and unfair business practices. It does not require creditors to calculate their credit charges in any particular way; however, they must disclose certain basic information so that the consumer fully understands the loan.

Scope of the Bill

This bill will provide protection and facilitate the terms of information that is given to the consumer by mortgage brokers, loan originators, lenders, and real estate agents. The Commission on Hispanic Affairs supports this bill and believes it will help deter fraudulent actions against the consumer by banks and lending companies whose licenses are not certified in accordance with Chapter 63.14 RCW.

The people of the State of Washington have tasked the Commission on Hispanic Affairs with advising the Governor, the Legislature, and state and local agencies on issues that affect the Latino community of the State.

Primary Sponsor:
Senator. Brian
Weinstein

LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

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Relating to Instruction of Spanish and Chinese in Public Schools

Background

SB 6466 will allow a task force to study the benefits of teaching Spanish and Chinese in public schools starting at the elementary level.

Specific Issues

Benefits of learning a language at an early age:

- Has a positive effect on intellectual growth and enriches and enhances a child's mental development
- Leaves students with more flexibility in thinking, greater sensitivity to language, and a better ear for listening; Improves a child's understanding of his/her native language
- Gives a child the ability to communicate with people s/he would otherwise not have the chance to know
- Opens the door to other cultures and helps a child understand and appreciate people from other countries
- Gives a student a head start in language requirements for college
- Increases job opportunities in many careers where knowing another language is a real asset.
(Center for Applied Linguistics)

Students of foreign languages have access to a greater number of career possibilities and develop a deeper understanding of their own and other cultures. Some evidence also suggests that children who receive second language instruction are more creative and better at solving complex problems. Individuals Studies have shown that bilinguals outperform similar monolingual peers on both verbal and nonverbal tests of intelligence and tend to achieve higher scores on standardized tests.

Washington State currently does not require school districts to provide instruction in languages other than English for elementary students. In states where instruction in languages is offered; studies have shown academic improvements for those who participated.

Scope of the Bill

This bill will allow a task force of qualified individuals and groups to conduct a study to determine what resources are available to our school districts and the best way to proceed in giving our school age students the opportunity to study a second language beginning at the elementary level. Giving our youth the opportunity to learn the Spanish or Chinese language at an early age will help bridge the gap occurring in academics on several levels. In addition, the benefits to society are many. Americans fluent in other languages enhance our economic competitiveness abroad, improve global communication, and maintain our political and security interests.

**Primary Sponsors:
Senators
Roach, Tom,
Rasmussen,
McAuliffe,
Hobbs,
Stevens,
Devlin, Shin
and Carrell.**

The U.S. is the **only** industrialized country that routinely graduates students from high school who lack knowledge of a foreign language.

52.7% of Europeans are fluent in both their native tongue and at least one other language.

Only 9.3 of Americans are fluent in both their native tongue and another language.

The upward trend in language learning must accelerate if the U.S. is to continue to be a major participant on the international stage.

The people of the State of Washington have tasked the Commission on Hispanic Affairs with advising the Governor, the Legislature, and state and local agencies on issues that affect the Latino community of the State.

Legislative Testimony in SB 6466, prepared by Susan Jones

Created on 02/12/2008

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LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS



Creating learning opportunities to assist high school students

Background

SB 6673 will extend learning opportunities to assist high school students to obtain a diploma.

Specific Issues

- There are many students in Washington State who need additional time even after the standard four years of high school to gain the academic skills and proficiency necessary to meet all graduation requirements and to succeed in the workplace.
- More bilingual teachers will help facilitate the students in different subject areas and also those students that English is not their first language.
- Every student faces a different challenge and barrier to reach their academic success.

Scope of the Bill

The extended learning opportunities program is created for eligible eleventh and twelfth grade students who are not on track to meet local or state graduate requirements as well as eighth grade students who might not be on track to meet the standards to be eligible for entry to high school. The Commission on Hispanic Affairs supports this bill and it will provide opportunities including apprenticeships, notifying parents and students when alternative assessment opportunities become available, any credit deficiencies, helping in transitional bilingual program and strategies and alternative education options available to student after grade twelve or until the age of twenty-one.

The people of the State of Washington have tasked the Commission on Hispanic Affairs with advising the Governor, the Legislature, and state and local agencies on issues that affect the Latino community of the State.

Primary Sponsor:
Senator. Rosemary
McAuliffe

Legislative Testimony HB 6673 by Donald Barker

Created on 2/28/2008 8:03:00 AM

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LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS



Requirements and Restrictions on Purchases of Used Vehicles

Background:

SB6768 will require used car vehicle dealers to make certain disclosures in writing.

According to The Kiplinger Washington Editors, Inc. almost three in four car purchases last year were made on the used-car lots. Despite all the rebates and incentives on new-car purchases, used-car sales are projected to continue to grow strongly. Cars today are certainly being built better than ever before, thus, they are lasting longer. This coupled with the \$9000 sticker on the average used car versus the price of a new car (a bit over \$20,000 on average) is why used-car sales will surely augment.

Specific Issues

Automobile fraud is prevalent amongst the Hispanic community because of their limited English skills, inability to comprehend, and lack of knowledge of consumer protection laws.

There are many categories of automobile fraud, including: violating the "single document rule;" requiring a deferred down payment with improper procedures; including "negative equity"/"over allowance in the sale; sale of wrecked vehicles; sale of previously repurchased "lemon" vehicles; odometer fraud; and various other financial frauds that occur in the advertising or at the time of sale or lease of a vehicle. (Utility Consumers' Action Network)

Used auto sales complaints involved mechanical issues, warranty disclosures (including "as is" sales) misleading advertising, financing/on the spot delivery, undisclosed prior damage, title and registration issues, and terms and conditions of extended service plans. (Consumer Federation of America)

Scope of the Bill

Immigrants unable to understand English are left largely to the morals of the marketplace. Latinos and other language minorities are the victims of choice for unscrupulous merchants who prey on their inability to understand the terms of their purchase. Latinos are also taken advantage in financial services such as exorbitant financing and deals on loans for used car purchases.

Approval of this bill will undoubtedly protect all consumers' especially vulnerable constituencies such as recent immigrants, the elderly, handicapped, and the non English speaking.

Primary Sponsor: Senator Weinstein

1999 to 2005 Top 5
Consumer
Complaints have
been Used Car Sales
(Consumer Federation of
America)

Used Car purchases
from private sales,
newspaper ads, and
the like accounted
for 11 million
transactions last
year. (Kiplinger WA
Editors, Inc)

Washington laws
don't require much
consumer
information when it
comes to previously
totaled vehicles.
(BNET)

Used cars provide a
tremendous value to
consumers,
especially low
income consumers
and first time car
purchasers.
(Consumer Federation
of America)

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LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS



Providing Public Notices of Public Health, Safety, and Welfare in language other than English.

Background

SHB 1675 will direct state agencies to provide public notices in bilingual or multilingual to a community or area to advise or inform the public on issues concerning the health, safety or welfare of this community where there are a significant number of residents who do not speak English or have limited proficiency in English.

Specific Issues

Washington State's minority population is increasing significantly. Our state is ranked 4th in the nation in terms of minority population growth. These numbers are expected to increase faster than any non-minority population. The ability to communicate and comprehend the English language is a critical skill set for residents in our state.

In King Co. alone, there is an estimated 44,365 residents who are considered linguistically isolated. For ages 16-64, the percentage of Hispanic residents who do not speak English well, if at all, is 32.5%. For the Asian population within the same age bracket, it's estimated to be 18.5% and increases to 49.2% for those 65 yrs and older.

Scope of the Bill

There are situations that arise in which announcements need to be posted providing information to the public. This bill will require those postings be made in languages representative of the community. To insure the safety for all, it is important that everyone in the community is provided with written documentation that they are able to interpret and understand.

Primary Sponsor:
Senators Santos,
Curtis, McDermott,
Williams , Hasegwa,
Upthegrove,
Roberts, Schual-
Berke, Darneille,
and Simpson

Washington ranks among the top ten states with the largest % of minorities in nearly all categories.

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Legislative Testimony in SHB 1675, prepared by Susan Jones

Created on 2/29/2008

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