

Senator Wayne A. Harper proposes the following substitute bill:

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION REGARDING WESTERN

GOVERNORS UNIVERSITY

2015 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Wayne A. Harper

House Sponsor: Eric K. Hutchings

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This concurrent resolution of the Legislature and the Governor supports partnering with Western Governors University to meet the needs of Utah's adults.

Highlighted Provisions:

This resolution:

- ▶ expresses support for partnering with Western Governors University to meet the needs of Utah's adults;
- ▶ strongly urges the Utah State Board of Regents to:
 - further recognize and endorse online, competency-based education as an important component of Utah's higher education system;
 - continue to promote Western Governors University along with all other current Utah institutions of higher education;
 - work to eliminate unnecessary barriers to the delivery of education programs provided by Western Governors University; and
 - integrate Western Governors University Utah's academic programs and services into the state's higher education policy and strategy; and
- ▶ urges the Utah Department of Workforce Services, the Utah State Office of



26 Education, the Utah Department of Veterans' and Military Affairs, and Utah employers to:

- 27 • explore methods for promoting online competency-based educational
- 28 opportunities like Western Governors University for dislocated workers,
- 29 veterans, members of the Utah National Guard, and other Utahns in need of
- 30 higher education achievement and bachelor's degrees;
- 31 • endorse and support Western Governors University as an important component
- 32 of the state higher education system; and
- 33 • increase their efforts to promote and support Western Governors University as a
- 34 cost-effective option for working adults to increase their educational attainment.

35 **Special Clauses:**

36 None



38 *Be it resolved by the Legislature of the state of Utah, the Governor concurring therein:*

39 WHEREAS, Utah's adults are in need of greater access to opportunities to obtain higher
40 education degrees;

41 WHEREAS, currently, 43% of Utah's adults hold a post-secondary degree or certificate;

42 WHEREAS, it is projected that 66% of Utah's jobs will require a post-secondary degree
43 or certificate by 2020;

44 WHEREAS, for Utah's citizens to be competitive in the global economy, more citizens
45 need the skills and knowledge that come with degree completion and college credentials;

46 WHEREAS, Western Governors University was created to provide access to affordable
47 education and training opportunities through online, competency-based programs;

48 WHEREAS, Western Governors University is a nationally recognized nonprofit and
49 independent university that is regionally and nationally accredited;

50 WHEREAS, Western Governors University offers online degrees based on
51 demonstrating competency as opposed to degrees based on credit hours, clock hours, or grades;

52 WHEREAS, Western Governors University is fully independent and requires no direct
53 financial participation from the state to offer its curriculum to its students;

54 WHEREAS, Western Governors University provides a viable and self-sustaining
55 complement to traditional learning methods through online, competency-based distance
56 learning methods;

57 WHEREAS, Western Governors University was ranked first in the nation in secondary
58 education and 16th in the nation in elementary education by the National Council on Teacher
59 Quality;

60 WHEREAS, Western Governors University confers 15% of all master's degrees and 5%
61 of all bachelor's degrees in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education in the
62 nation;

63 WHEREAS, among minorities, Western Governors University is one of the top five
64 institutions conferring bachelor's degrees in nursing and one of the top 10 institutions
65 conferring master's degrees in nursing in the nation;

66 WHEREAS, the average time to complete a bachelor's degree at Western Governors
67 University is three years, at a cost of only \$6,000 per 12 month year;

68 WHEREAS, Western Governors University students are judged by employers to be
69 very well prepared for their jobs;

70 WHEREAS, Western Governors University has demonstrated success in providing
71 online, competency-based education to Utahns and shares the state's goals for increasing the
72 number of citizens who have obtained high-quality bachelor's degrees through cost-effective,
73 flexible, and quickly initiated means; and

74 WHEREAS, the state of Utah should take additional steps to enable Western Governors
75 University to expand services in the state for the benefit of Utah's citizens:

76 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah, the
77 Governor concurring therein, supports partnering with Western Governors University to meet
78 the needs of Utah's adults.

79 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and the Governor strongly urge the
80 Utah State Board of Regents to:

- 81 • further recognize and endorse online, competency-based education as an
82 important component of Utah's higher education system;
- 83 • continue to promote Western Governors University along with all other
84 current Utah institutions of higher education;
- 85 • work to eliminate unnecessary barriers to the delivery of such education
86 programs provided by Western Governors University; and
- 87 • integrate Western Governors University Utah's academic programs and

88 services into the state's higher education policy and strategy.

89 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and the Governor urge the Utah
90 Department of Workforce Services, the Utah State Office of Education, the Utah Department
91 of Veterans' and Military Affairs, and Utah employers to:

92 • explore methods for promoting online competency-based educational
93 opportunities like Western Governors University for dislocated workers,
94 veterans, members of the Utah National Guard, and other Utahns in need
95 of higher education achievement and bachelor's degrees;

96 • endorse and support Western Governors University as an important
97 component of the state higher education system; and

98 • increase their efforts to promote and support Western Governors
99 University as a cost-effective option for working adults to increase their
100 educational attainment.

101 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Utah State
102 Board of Regents, the Utah Department of Workforce Services, the Utah State Office of
103 Education, the Utah Department of Veterans' and Military Affairs, the Utah Chamber of
104 Commerce, Western Governors University, and the members of Utah's congressional
105 delegation.