
SENATE BILL 6168

State of Washington

68th Legislature

2024 Regular Session

By Senator Stanford

1 AN ACT Relating to renewing Washington's international
2 leadership; amending RCW 43.290.005, 43.290.020, 43.330.065,
3 43.15.050, 43.15.060, and 43.15.090; adding new sections to chapter
4 43.290 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 44.04 RCW; and repealing
5 RCW 43.15.085.

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

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 43.290
8 RCW to read as follows:

9 (1) The office of international relations and protocol shall
10 develop a strategic international engagement plan to guide
11 Washington's international engagement and economic development. The
12 plan must create a common framework for the state's engagement in
13 international activities, to include: Trade missions, economic
14 development, and interpersonal knowledge exchanges.

15 (2) The office may consult with entities relevant to Washington's
16 international presence when developing the strategic plan, including:
17 Associate development organizations, business and civic
18 organizations, consular officials, executive and small cabinet
19 agencies, institutions of higher education, immigration and labor
20 organizations, public ports, state offices, and private and nonprofit
21 organizations.

1 (3) The office may utilize the resources of Results Washington
2 for technical and operational assistance in developing the strategic
3 plan.

4 (4) The office must complete an initial strategic plan by July 1,
5 2025. This strategic plan shall undergo periodic review to measure
6 progress and outcomes at least every two and a half years thereafter,
7 and it shall be fully updated at least every five years thereafter.

8 **Sec. 2.** RCW 43.290.005 and 1991 c 24 s 1 are each amended to
9 read as follows:

10 The legislature finds that it is in the public interest to create
11 an office of international relations and protocol in order to: Make
12 international relations and protocol (~~(a broad-based,~~)^(r)) focused^(r)
13 and functional (~~(part of)~~) across state government; provide
14 leadership in state government with respect to international
15 relations and assist the legislature and state elected officials with
16 international issues affecting the state; establish coordinated
17 methods for responding to foreign governments and institutions
18 seeking cooperative activities with and within Washington; coordinate
19 and improve communication and resource sharing among various state
20 offices, agencies, and educational institutions with international
21 programs; develop and promote state policies that increase
22 international (~~(literacy)~~) engagement and cross-cultural
23 understanding among Washington state's citizens; expand Washington
24 state's international cooperation role in (~~(such)~~) vital areas (~~(as~~
25 ~~the environment, education, science, culture, and sports)~~) of public
26 policy, including but not limited to economic development, trade and
27 industry, and tourism and sports, as well as education, culture,
28 science, and resilience; (~~establish coordinated methods for~~
29 ~~responding to the increasing number of inquiries by foreign~~
30 ~~governments and institutions seeking cooperative activities within~~
31 ~~Washington state; provide leadership in state government on~~
32 ~~international relations and assistance to the legislature and state~~
33 ~~elected officials on international issues affecting the state;)~~) and
34 assist with multistate international efforts(~~(; and coordinate and~~
35 ~~improve communication and resource sharing among various state~~
36 ~~offices, agencies, and educational institutions with international~~
37 ~~programs.~~

38 ~~It is the purpose of this chapter to bring these functions~~
39 ~~together in a new office under the office of the governor in order to~~

1 ~~establish a visible, coordinated, and comprehensive approach to~~
2 ~~international relations and protocol~~)).

3 **Sec. 3.** RCW 43.290.020 and 1991 c 24 s 4 are each amended to
4 read as follows:

5 The office of international relations and protocol may:

6 (1) Create ~~((temporary))~~ advisory committees as necessary to
7 ~~((deal with specific international issues))~~ execute its
8 responsibilities. The duration and composition of such advisory
9 committees may be determined by the office. Advisory committee
10 representation may include statewide elected officials from the
11 executive branch, or their designees, as well as representatives of
12 the legislative branch and the judiciary. Representation may also
13 include external organizations such as ~~((the Seattle consular~~
14 ~~corps,)) world affairs councils, public ports, world trade
15 organizations, ~~((private nonprofit organizations dealing with~~
16 ~~international education or international environmental issues,~~
17 ~~organizations concerned with international understanding, businesses~~
18 ~~with experience in international relations, or other organizations~~
19 ~~deemed appropriate by the director))~~ associate development
20 organizations, business and civic organizations, consular officials,
21 executive and small cabinet agencies, institutions of higher
22 education, immigration and labor organizations, public ports, state
23 offices, and private and nonprofit organizations. The governor, or
24 the governor's designee, shall chair such advisory committees;~~

25 (2) Designate foreign jurisdictions, such as national
26 governments, subnational governments, and international
27 organizations, as jurisdictions of strategic importance to
28 Washington;

29 (3) Establish procedures and requirements for operations and
30 expenditures to support and enhance state government partnership and
31 relationships with foreign jurisdictions, particularly those
32 identified as of strategic importance. Such operations and
33 expenditures are intended to strengthen state agency economic
34 development and policy cooperation, enable the implementation of the
35 strategic international engagement plan, as determined by the
36 director, and provide resources for government-to-government
37 engagement, as well as support of inbound and outbound delegations to
38 and from Washington state;

1 (4) Accept or request grants or gifts from citizens and other
2 private sources to be used to defray the costs of appropriate hosting
3 of foreign dignitaries, including appropriate gift-giving and
4 reciprocal gift-giving, or other activities of the office. The office
5 shall open and maintain a bank account into which it shall deposit
6 all money received under this subsection. Such money and the interest
7 accruing thereon shall not constitute public funds, shall be kept
8 segregated and apart from funds of the state, and shall not be
9 subject to appropriation or allotment by the state or subject to
10 chapter 43.88 RCW.

11 **Sec. 4.** RCW 43.330.065 and 2023 c 470 s 2081 are each amended to
12 read as follows:

13 ~~((The department of commerce, in consultation with the office of~~
14 ~~protocol, the office of the secretary of state, the department of~~
15 ~~agriculture, and the employment security department[,])) (1) The
16 office of international relations and protocol, in consultation with
17 the department of commerce, the department of agriculture, and other
18 state agencies and offices as appropriate, shall identify up to
19 ~~((fifteen countries))~~ 15 foreign jurisdictions that are of strategic
20 importance to the development and diversification of Washington's
21 international trade relations.~~

22 (2) When designating such jurisdictions of strategic importance,
23 the office shall consider factors including:

24 (a) Existing or potential partnerships in key industrial sectors;

25 (b) The presence of cultural and people-to-people ties;

26 (c) The state's economic development priorities and shared
27 interests, consistent with the state strategic international
28 engagement plan;

29 (d) The presence of international trade offices or other program-
30 based engagement conducted by state agencies; and

31 (e) Historic or existing bilateral agreements established on a
32 government-to-government basis.

33 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** A new section is added to chapter 43.290
34 RCW to read as follows:

35 The office of international relations and protocol shall:

36 (1) Advise and assist the governor, the legislature, and other
37 independent elected officials on international developments that may
38 affect the state;

1 (2) Establish and build government-to-government relationships
2 between the state, foreign governments, and international
3 organizations;

4 (3) Coordinate protocol for foreign dignitaries visiting the
5 governor, the legislature, the judiciary, and other state agencies
6 and offices, including the appropriate criteria and procedures for
7 the signing of bilateral agreements by the governor on behalf of the
8 state of Washington;

9 (4) Advise, coordinate, and support engagement between the state,
10 foreign governments, and international partners;

11 (5) Establish, in coordination with the office of the premier of
12 British Columbia, an intergovernmental exchange between the state and
13 British Columbia, cochaired by the governor and the premier of
14 British Columbia or their designees, concerning issues of mutual
15 interests;

16 (6) Designate an international engagement advisory committee to
17 leverage the expertise of the state's international engagement
18 community;

19 (7) Assist institutions of higher education in implementing
20 programs for international cooperation and student exchange; and

21 (8) Improve coordination between state government and the
22 Washington tourism marketing authority.

23 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** A new section is added to chapter 44.04
24 RCW to read as follows:

25 A Washington state—British Columbia interparliamentary exchange
26 group is created. The purpose of the group is to facilitate
27 legislator-to-legislator communication between the two governments,
28 in coordination with the office of the premier of British Columbia.
29 The state's representative for the group is the chair of the
30 legislative committee on economic development and international
31 relations.

32 **Sec. 7.** RCW 43.15.050 and 2003 c 265 s 1 are each amended to
33 read as follows:

34 The legislative international trade account is created in the
35 custody of the state treasurer. All moneys received by the president
36 of the senate and the secretary of state from gifts, grants, and
37 endowments for international trade hosting, international relations,
38 and international missions activities must be deposited in the

1 account. Only private, nonpublic gifts, grants, and endowments may be
2 deposited in the account. A person, as defined in RCW 42.52.010, may
3 not donate, gift, grant, or endow more than five thousand dollars per
4 calendar year to the legislative international trade account.
5 Expenditures from the account may be used only for the purposes of
6 international trade hosting, international relations, and
7 international trade mission activities, (~~excluding travel and~~
8 ~~lodging,~~) in which the president and members of the senate, members
9 of the house of representatives, and the secretary of state
10 participate in an official capacity. An appropriation is not required
11 for expenditures. All requests by individual legislators for use of
12 funds from this account must be first approved by the secretary of
13 the senate for members of the senate or the chief clerk of the house
14 of representatives for members of the house of representatives. All
15 expenditures from the account shall be authorized by the final signed
16 approval of (~~the chief clerk of the house of representatives, the~~
17 ~~secretary of the senate, and~~) the president of the senate.

18 **Sec. 8.** RCW 43.15.060 and 2020 c 114 s 20 are each amended to
19 read as follows:

20 (1) Economic development and in particular international trade,
21 tourism, and investment have become increasingly important to
22 Washington, affecting the state's employment, revenues, and general
23 economic well-being. Additionally, economic trends are rapidly
24 changing and the international marketplace has become increasingly
25 competitive as states and countries seek to improve and safeguard
26 their own economic well-being. The purpose of the legislative
27 committee on economic development and international relations is to
28 provide responsive and consistent involvement by the legislature in
29 economic development to maintain a healthy state economy and to
30 provide employment opportunities to Washington residents.

31 (2) There is created a legislative committee on economic
32 development and international relations which shall consist of
33 (~~six~~) eight senators and (~~six~~) eight representatives from the
34 legislature and the lieutenant governor who shall serve as
35 chairperson. The senate members of the committee shall be appointed
36 by the president of the senate and the house members of the committee
37 shall be appointed by the speaker of the house. Not more than
38 (~~three~~) four members from each house shall be from the same

1 political party. Vacancies occurring shall be filled by the
2 appointing authority.

3 **Sec. 9.** RCW 43.15.090 and 1985 c 467 s 23 are each amended to
4 read as follows:

5 The legislative committee on economic development and
6 international relations shall cooperate, act, and function with
7 legislative committees, executive agencies, and with the councils or
8 committees of other states and of provinces and territories of Canada
9 similar to this committee, and with other interstate research
10 organizations.

11 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 10.** RCW 43.15.085 (Legislative committee on
12 economic development and international relations—Expenses) and 1985 c
13 467 s 22 are each repealed.

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