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**SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6168**

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**State of Washington**

**68th Legislature**

**2024 Regular Session**

**By** Senate Business, Financial Services, Gaming & Trade (originally sponsored by Senators Stanford, Frame, Nobles, and Wellman)

READ FIRST TIME 01/24/24.

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; recodifying  
5 RCW 43.330.065; and repealing 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,))~~) focused(~~((,))~~)  
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) In conjunction with the legislative committee on economic  
26 development and international relations, designate foreign  
27 jurisdictions, such as national governments, subnational governments,  
28 and international organizations, as jurisdictions of strategic  
29 importance to Washington;

30 (3) Establish procedures and requirements for operations and  
31 expenditures to support and enhance state government partnership and  
32 relationships with foreign jurisdictions, particularly those  
33 identified as of strategic importance. Such operations and  
34 expenditures are intended to strengthen state agency economic  
35 development and policy cooperation, enable the implementation of the  
36 strategic international engagement plan, as determined by the  
37 director, and provide resources for government-to-government  
38 engagement, as well as support of inbound and outbound delegations to  
39 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 and the legislative  
17 committee on economic development and international relations, in  
18 consultation with the department of commerce, the department of  
19 agriculture, and other state agencies and offices as appropriate,  
20 shall jointly identify up to ((fifteen—countries)) 15 foreign  
21 jurisdictions that are of strategic importance to the development and  
22 diversification of Washington's international trade relations.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

36       The office of international relations and protocol shall:

1 (1) Advise and assist the governor, the legislature, and other  
2 independently elected officials on international developments that  
3 may affect the state;

4 (2) Establish and build government-to-government relationships  
5 between the state, foreign governments, and international  
6 organizations;

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

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

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

19 (6) Designate an international engagement advisory committee to  
20 leverage the expertise of the state's international engagement  
21 community;

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

24 (8) Improve coordination between state government and the  
25 Washington tourism marketing authority.

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

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

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

36 The legislative international trade account is created in the  
37 custody of the state treasurer. All moneys received by the president  
38 of the senate and the secretary of state from gifts, grants, and

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

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

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

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

1 ((three)) four members from each house shall be from the same  
2 political party. Vacancies occurring shall be filled by the  
3 appointing authority.

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

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

12 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 10.** RCW 43.15.085 (Legislative committee on  
13 economic development and international relations—Expenses) and 1985 c  
14 467 s 22 are each repealed.

15 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 11.** RCW 43.330.065 is recodified as a section  
16 in chapter 43.290 RCW.

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