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**Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness  
Committee**

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**HB 2389**

**Brief Description:** Concerning forensic investigations.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Moeller and Kirby.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Increases the membership of the Washington State Forensic Investigations Council (Council) from 12 to 13 members.
- Requires the Council to develop minimum standards for facilities used to perform autopsies.

**Hearing Date:** 1/20/10

**Staff:** Yvonne Walker (786-7841).

**Background:**

The Washington State Forensic Investigations Council (Council) is a 12-member committee appointed by the Governor to oversee death investigations as part of the state's criminal justice system. The Council members include each of the following: a county coroner, county prosecutor, county prosecutor who also serves as ex officio county coroner, county medical examiner, county sheriff; chief of police, the chief of the state patrol, pathologist who is currently in private practice, and two members of a county legislative authority and two members of a city legislative authority.

The Council authorizes expenditures from the Council's Death Investigations Account for the purpose of assisting local jurisdictions in the investigation of multiple deaths involving unanticipated, extraordinary, and catastrophic events, or involving multiple jurisdictions. The Council also oversees the Washington State Patrol's Bureau of Forensic Laboratory Services

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

(Bureau) and actively prepares and approves the Bureau's budget prior to submission to the Office of Financial Management.

**Summary of Bill:**

The membership of the Council is increased to a total of 13 members. The Council must include two medical examiners: one medical examiner must be from a county with a population of over 600,000; and one medical examiner must be from a county with a population of under 500,000.

In order to help promote accurate and efficient autopsies, the Council must develop minimum standards for facilities. The standards must include, but is not limited to, the following areas: equipment, sanitation, lighting, ventilation, and other environmental systems. The Council must also develop a written methodology for determining whether a facility is in compliance with the minimum standards and make recommendations regarding the following:

- an inspection mechanism that could be used by a certifying body to determine whether a facility is in compliance with the minimum standards; and
- other methods through which the minimum standards could be implemented on a statewide basis.

The Council must report the minimum standards, the methodology, and recommendations to the Governor and appropriate legislative committees by December 1, 2011.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Preliminary fiscal note available.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.