

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1646

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### As Reported By House Committee On:

Government Operations

**Title:** An act relating to the creation of a citizen suggestion program.

**Brief Description:** Creating the citizen suggestion program.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Benton, Wolfe and Dickerson; by request of Secretary of State.

### Brief History:

#### Committee Activity:

Government Operations: 2/17/95, 2/22/95 [DPS].

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## HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Reams, Chairman; Goldsmith, Vice Chairman; L. Thomas, Vice Chairman; Scott, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Honeyford; Hymes; Mulliken; D. Schmidt; Van Luven and Wolfe.

**Minority Report:** Without recommendation. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Rust, Ranking Minority Member; Chopp; R. Fisher; Hargrove and Sommers.

**Staff:** Bonnie Austin (786-7135).

**Background:** The state's Productivity Board operates an Employee Suggestion Program that rewards suggestions by state employees that promote efficiency and economy in state government. A cash award of 10 percent of the net savings, but not more than \$10,000, is authorized. The board sets guidelines for making cash awards for suggestions for which benefits to the state are intangible or for which benefits cannot be calculated. Awards are not normally to be made to an employee for a suggestion which is within the scope of the employee's regularly assigned responsibilities.

The Productivity Board consists of: the Secretary of State; the directors of the departments of Personnel, Financial Management, and General Administration; three persons with experience in administering incentives, appointed one each by the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Speaker of the House of Representatives; one

person representing state agencies and one representing higher education, appointed by the Governor; and other persons jointly appointed by the Governor and the Secretary of State to serve on an ad hoc, nonvoting basis. The board administers the Employee Suggestion Program. The Secretary of State chairs the board and staffing is provided by the Secretary of State's Office.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** The Productivity Board is directed to establish a Citizen Suggestion Program to encourage suggestions that will promote the efficiency and economy of state government. The maximum award is \$100. Each citizen who submits a suggestion will receive a letter of commendation.

The board will determine which agency is responsible for evaluating and implementing suggestions. If appropriate, the evaluation and implementation plan should be accomplished within two months. Suggestions covering areas of general government processes will be sent to the Governor's Office, the Senate, and the House of Representatives.

The following members are added to the Productivity Board: the State Auditor; five persons with experience in administering incentives, one being a director of a small agency, and four from the private sector; and one representing the brainstorm coordinators or teamwork incentive program liaisons, appointed by the Secretary of State for a one-year term. One representative of state agencies is removed from the board. All appointees of the Speaker of the House and the Lieutenant Governor must be from the private sector.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** The representative of state agencies is removed from the board. Two private sector representatives are added to the board, one appointed by the Lieutenant Governor and one by the Speaker of the House. All appointees of the Lieutenant Governor and Speaker of the House will be representatives of the private sector.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date of Substitute Bill:** Sections 1 through 6 (Citizen Suggestion Program) take effect October 1, 1995. Section 7 (Productivity Board Membership) takes effect immediately.

**Testimony For:** This program will save the state money. Under the Employee Suggestion Program, for every dollar spent on administering the program, there is a \$14 return. Even when the costs of agency staff time to evaluate and implement the suggestions are added in, the return is still \$7 to every dollar spent by the state. This program got a bipartisan start and has continued on that basis. Out of every 100

suggestions, five or six result in significant state savings. Allowing citizens to make suggestions will increase government credibility.

**Testimony Against:** Some state agencies are already very busy processing employee suggestions. This will double the number of suggestions that will require analysis. There needs to be a screening process. The two-month time frame for evaluation and implementation is too tight.

**Testified:** Representative Benton, prime sponsor; Ralph Munroe, Secretary of State; and Tom Kuchman, Department of Transportation.