

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5026

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Government Operations, February 9, 1995

Title: An act relating to separating the duties of coroner and prosecuting attorney.

Brief Description: Separating the duties of coroner and prosecuting attorney.

Sponsors: Senator Smith.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations: 1/17/95, 2/9/95 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5026 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Sheldon, Vice Chair; Drew, Hale, Heavey, McCaslin and Winsley.

Staff: Eugene Green (786-7405)

Background: Except as provided by home rule charter, all counties with a population of more than 40,000 have an elected prosecuting attorney and an elected coroner. In counties with a population of less than 40,000, no coroner is elected and the prosecuting attorney is the ex officio coroner.

Summary of Substitute Bill: In each county with a population of 20,000 or more and less than 40,000, the county legislative authority may appoint a coroner. If a county goes above 40,000, an appointed coroner continues until a coroner is elected at the next general election. This new population limit affects the following counties: Okanogan; Stevens; Kittitas; Douglas; Jefferson; and Pacific.

An appointed coroner serves at the pleasure of the county legislative authority and may serve two or more counties under an arrangement by interlocal agreement.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The original bill mandated that a coroner be elected in every county above 20,000 population.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: Prosecutors in small counties do not have the funds or time to do an adequate job as ex-officio coroner.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Tom McBride, WA Assoc. of Prosecuting Attorneys; Mike Smith, Pacific County Pros. Attorney; Judy Arnold, Thurston County Coroner.