

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5080

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Law & Justice, January 31, 1996

Title: An act relating to use of electronic security systems to prevent fraud involving driver's licenses and identicards.

Brief Description: Directing the department of licensing to develop electronic security systems to prevent fraud involving drivers' licenses and identicards.

Sponsors: Senators Smith, Gaspard, Roach, Long, Deccio, Haugen, Schow, Newhouse and Oke.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Law & Justice: 1/15/95 [DPS], 1/31/96 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Majority Report: That Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 5080 be substituted therefor, and the second substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Smith, Chair; Fairley, Vice Chair; Goings, Hargrove, Haugen, Long, Roach and Schow.

Staff: Susan Carlson (786-7418)

Background: Many government offices and private businesses rely on the presentation of a driver's license or state-issued identicard to verify a person's identity. However, fraud is often perpetrated against both government and businesses by the use of fraudulent identification. It has been suggested that a program be implemented that uses biometric identification to improve the reliability of driver's licenses and identicards. Biometric identification refers to the use of unique physical characteristics, such as fingerprints, to verify the identity of individuals.

Summary of Second Substitute Bill: The Legislature finds that there are many fraudulent transactions involving the use of documents that misrepresent the identity of the person. The most widely accepted form of identification is a driver's license. Financial losses to government and private businesses could be reduced by improving the verifiability of driver's licenses and identicards.

The Department of Licensing is required to conduct a study of the technology available and under development for assuring the validity of driver's licenses and identicards and that each person is only able to obtain one license or identicard. The study must examine biometric technology, the experience with biometrics in other jurisdictions and how a biometric approach could affect business practices of public agencies and other organizations in the state. The study is also required to recommend a biometric approach to be incorporated into the department's procedures for issuance of drivers' licenses and identicards. The study

must include examination of impacts of the recommended biometric approach on the department's customers and business practices; benefits, costs and risks for affected parties; methods of funding the additional technology; how to allow the Department of Social and Health Services to utilize the approach for verifying identity of persons on public assistance; and the potential impact on the use of fraudulent identification in retail and banking transactions. The department is required to report its conclusions and recommendations to the Legislature by December 1, 1997.

The department is required to form a steering committee to monitor the progress of the study and assure its quality. The director of the department is the chair of the committee and the members are representatives from the Office of Financial Management, Department of Information Services, Washington State Patrol, Department of Social and Health Services and the Office of the Administrator for the Courts. The committee shall also include representatives from the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, the retail and banking industries and other groups the department finds necessary to provide guidance on the study.

Second Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The original bill required the Department of Licensing to implement by July 1, 1997, a driver's license/identocard verification program. The program required a magnetic strip on driver's licenses and identicards to allow verification of validity, and an electronic finger scan at the time of application for a license or identocard. Beginning one year after implementation of the system, the department of social and health services must use the verification system to verify licenses or identicards offered by applicants for public assistance.

Appropriation: \$300,000 from general fund.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: The program would reduce losses to government and private business caused by the use of fraudulent identification.

Testimony Against: Government should not develop a database that requires biometric identification of so many citizens.

Testified: PRO: Tim Schellberg, Washington Assn. of Sheriff's & Police Chiefs; Joe Daniels, International Federation of Prof. & Tech. Engineers, Local 17; Meara Nisbet, Wash. Bankers Assn.; CON: Jerry Sheehan, ACLU; NEUTRAL: Ken Mark, Dept. of Licensing.