

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5266

As Passed Senate, February 13, 1995

Title: An act relating to court reporting.

Brief Description: Revising provisions regulating court reporting.

Sponsors: Senators Pelz, Newhouse, Heavey, Wood and West; by request of Department of Licensing.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor, Commerce & Trade: 1/19/95, 1/24/95 [DP].
Passed Senate, 2/13/95, 46-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE & TRADE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Pelz, Chair; Heavey, Vice Chair; Deccio, Franklin, Fraser, Hale, Newhouse, Palmer and Wojahn.

Staff: Traci Ratzliff (786-7452)

Background: Court reporters make verbatim records of court proceedings, depositions, and other official proceedings. A court reporter may work as an official reporter for a superior court judge or may work on an independent basis, reporting depositions and various official proceedings.

In 1989, the Legislature enacted the shorthand reporting practice act. The act provides that no person may represent himself or herself as a court reporter, shorthand reporter, certified shorthand reporter, or certified court reporter without first obtaining a certificate from the Department of Licensing. An applicant must pass an examination no more difficult than the examination for official reporters and meet other specific qualifications.

In the shorthand reporting practice act, the practice of "shorthand reporting or court reporting" is defined as "the making by means of written symbols or abbreviations in shorthand or machine writing of a verbatim record" of court proceedings, depositions, or other official proceedings and the producing of a transcript from the proceeding. However, the act did not prohibit the practice of court reporting or use of the title "certified court reporters" by stenomaskers who were practicing as of September 1, 1989.

Summary of Bill: The court reporting practice act is adopted. All references to the practice of "shorthand reporting or court reporting" are changed to "court reporting." A person may not practice as a court reporter without first obtaining a certificate from the department.

The definition of the "practice of court reporting" is expanded to include making a verbatim record by oral reporting by a stenomask reporter.

The Shorthand Reporting Advisory Board is abolished.

The qualifications for certification include meeting the standards set by the director and: (1) holding one of the following: (a) certificate of proficiency, registered professional reporter, registered merit reporter, or registered diplomate reporter from National Court Reporters Association; (b) certificate of proficiency or certificate of merit from National Stenomask Verbatim Reporters Association; or (c) a current Washington State court reporter certification; or (2) has passed an examination approved by the director or an examination that meets or exceeds the standards established by the director.

Stenomask reporters practicing in Washington during the past two years are grandfathered into the act if they apply to the department before January 1, 1996.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This bill will allow the Department of Licensing greater flexibility in the implementation of the current certification requirements for shorthand reporters, resulting in cost savings for the state and the licensees. In addition, it corrects existing problems with regard to stenomaskers being able to obtain certification by clearly bringing them under the certification requirements.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Mike Collins, Department of Licensing (pro); Theresa Rider, President, Washington Shorthand Reporters' Association.