

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5303

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Government Operations, February 21, 1995

Title: An act relating to official travel by public officers and employees.

Brief Description: Restricting public and municipal officers and public employees' use of first class airplane accommodations and luxury hotels if traveling on public business.

Sponsors: Senators Heavey, Quigley, Winsley, Deccio, Hochstatter and Oke.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations: 1/31/95, 2/21/95 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5303 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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

Staff: Rod McAulay (786-7754)

Background: When traveling on public business, state and local government officers and employees are not expressly prohibited from flying first class.

Summary of Substitute Bill: When traveling on public business at public expense, state and local government officers and employees must minimize travel expenses by obtaining the least costly air-fare for the most direct and timely routing on the carrier selected unless otherwise required to accommodate a person with disabilities when air travel is required.

Violations of this act constitute a violation of the state ethics law and are subject to the procedures and sanctions administered by the state ethics boards, and a violation of the statutory sanctions pertaining to municipal officers, which include penalties and forfeiture of office.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The original bill prohibited state and local government employees and officials: (1) from staying in luxury or deluxe accommodations when standard grade facilities are available; (2) from accruing any benefits such as frequent flyer mileage credit resulting from official travel for their personal use; and (3) from receiving first class air transportation or luxury or deluxe lodging as a gift when on official business. Accrued air travel mileage benefits must be applied to the account of the government entity paying for the travel.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 20, 1995.

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

Testimony For: None.

Testimony Against: It is not clear what luxury or deluxe facilities are. Luxury and deluxe may include business class in foreign cities.

Testified: Stan Finkelstein, AWC; Pat Jones, WA Public Ports Assn. (con).