

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5678

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Government Operations, March 1, 1995

Title: An act relating to local government whistleblower reporting.

Brief Description: Changing whistleblower provisions.

Sponsors: Senators Haugen, Prentice, Long, Heavey, Prince, Wojahn, Kohl and Winsley; by request of State Auditor.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations: 2/14/95, 3/1/95 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5678 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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

Staff: Rod McAulay (786-7754)

Background: The local government "whistleblower" laws require that the governing body or chief administrative officer of each local government adopt and publish a policy on the appropriate procedures for reporting improper governmental action. The policy must indicate the person or persons to whom an employee may make such reports.

Although this law was enacted in 1992, many local governments have not adopted and published the required policies.

Summary of Substitute Bill: If a local government has failed to adopt and publish policies advising employees to whom they may report alleged improper governmental actions, the employees may make such reports to the county prosecuting attorney, unless the alleged improper action involves the prosecuting attorney or an employee of the prosecuting attorney, in which event the complaining employee may report to the Attorney General.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The original bill does not provide the alternative of reporting to the Attorney General if the prosecuting attorney or an employee of the prosecuting attorney is involved in the alleged improper governmental action.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This will plug a hole in the local whistleblower law. Some local jurisdictions, like King County, have not adopted procedures for their employees.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Randy Finden, State Auditor's Office (pro).