

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5724

As Passed Senate, March 10, 1995

Title: An act relating to state court reports.

Brief Description: Simplifying publication and distribution of court reports.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Law & Justice (originally sponsored by Senators Quigley, Long and Haugen; by request of State Law Library).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Law & Justice: 2/23/95, 2/27/95 [DPS].
Passed Senate, 3/10/95, 46-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5724 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Smith, Chair; Hargrove, Haugen, Johnson, Long, McCaslin, Roach and Schow.

Staff: Cynthia Runger (786-7717)

Background: The Commission on Supreme Court Reports ("the Commission") oversees the Office of the Reporter of Decisions ("the Reporter"), which publishes the decisions of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals decisions.

The Supreme Court purchases for the state at least 300 copies of each volume of Supreme Court and Court of Appeals reports. These reports are distributed by the State Law Librarian to various offices and agencies throughout the state, including the state law library, state courts, public libraries, and law school libraries.

The Commission consists of six members: the Chief Justice, the Supreme Court Reporter of Decisions, the State Law Librarian, a Court of Appeals judge, the Public Printer, and an appointed state bar representative.

The legislative supplemental budget passed last session required the reporter's office to be self-funding. These changes are needed to meet the mandate of the supplemental budget.

Summary of Bill: The Commission's duties and membership are changed. The Commission no longer publishes the opinions; instead, it serves as an advisory body to the Supreme Court regarding the publication of the courts' decisions. The publishing of the reports may be accomplished by contractual relations with private vendors and the Supreme Court.

The duty of distributing the reports is removed from the State Law Librarian and allocated to the Supreme Court Reporter. The reporter is required to provide one copy of each

volume to each county law library, one copy to each accredited law school in this state and as many copies as the state library needs.

The Commission's membership includes the Chief Justice, the Reporter of Decisions, the State Law Librarian, a judge of the Court of Appeals, a member of the bar, and other members as determined by the Chief Justice.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: This bill is necessary to comply with last session's legislative supplemental budget.

Testimony Against: It is necessary to have public representation on the commission. Also, the bill should be amended to provide equal access to all aspects of the law, including the opinions, headnotes, and case summaries produced by the Reporter of Decisions.

Testified: Debbie Norwood, Reporter of Decisions (pro); Linda Dunn, WA State Bar Association (con); Scott Wetzel, CD Law (con).

House Amendment(s): The amendment requires the Commission on Court Reports to develop a plan by July 1, 1997, for the non-exclusive availability of the materials prepared by the Reporter of Decisions.