FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 6315

C 277 L 96
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Revising procedures for recoupment of assessments against offenders.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections (originally sponsored by Senators Hargrove, Long, Kohl and Schow; by request of Department of Corrections).

Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections
House Committee on Corrections

Background: Under legislation passed in 1995, the Department of Corrections is required to record a debt against an offender's institution account when the department provides certain services and supplies to an inmate who is indigent. The department is further authorized to recoup the assessments if/when the offender's institution account later exceeds the indigency standard.

A federal district court in eastern Washington recently ruled that the department does not have authority under current law to collect court costs from an offender's institution account when the court dismisses the offender's lawsuit against the department and assesses court costs against him or her.

Summary: The authority of the Department of Corrections to collect offender debts is expanded to include other remedies after offenders are released from incarceration and no longer have institution accounts.

The department is also required to record as a debt against an offender's institution account any costs assessed by a court against an inmate plaintiff where the state is providing a defense to the action.

The department is authorized to use the collection services available through general administration or private collection agencies to collect outstanding debts owed by offenders to the department after their release from incarceration. These options are not the department's exclusive remedies, but are in addition to any other available remedy. The conditions for contracting with private collection agencies are specified.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	49 0	
House	96 0	(House amended)
Senate	46 0	(Senate concurred)

Effective: June 6, 1996