

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6398

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Human Services & Corrections, January 30, 1996

Title: An act relating to background checks of employees at the special commitment center.

Brief Description: Providing for background checks of employees at the special commitment center.

Sponsors: Senators Hargrove, Long and Oke; by request of Department of Social and Health Services.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services & Corrections: 1/11/96, 1/25/96, 1/30/96 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6398 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Hargrove, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Kohl, Long, Moyer, Prentice, Schow, Smith, Strannigan, Thibaudeau and Zarelli.

Staff: Jodi Walker (786-7464)

Background: Historically, the Special Commitment Center (SCC) required background checks on all prospective staff having resident contact. The authorization for such checks was derived from statutes covering persons with developmental disabilities. When the persons with developmental disabilities offender program was removed from the SCC, the SCC no longer could legally conduct background checks. The SCC wants prospective employees to comply with a background check to satisfy safety and security needs.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Department of Social and Health Services has legal authority to require all Special Commitment Center employees, as a condition of employment, to comply with a background check.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Changes are made in the underlying bill to clarify that a record check will be conducted through the Washington State Patrol and the Federal Bureau of Investigations. Also clarified is the prohibition against use or dissemination of the record beyond hiring purposes. The only substantive change is that background checks shall also be conducted for current employees hired prior to the act's effective date if they have not had a previous check.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: The bill provides for background checks similar to those currently done for personnel of the Department of Corrections, in which the Special Commitment Center is housed. These checks would assist with safety and security needs at the Special Commitment Center.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: David Weston, Department of Social and Health Services (pro).