

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## SHB 1166

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C 237 L 97

Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Limiting the amount collected by a government for handling found property.

**Sponsors:** By House Committee on Government Administration (originally sponsored by Representatives Romero, D. Schmidt, Scott, Wolfe, Dunn and Mason).

### House Committee on Government Administration Senate Committee on Government Operations

**Background:** Various laws establish procedures for handling lost or unclaimed property in different situations. Property found by private citizens is handled differently from that found by law enforcement officers such as city police, state patrol, or county sheriffs. Other procedures govern the handling of unclaimed property held by museums or historical societies. Unclaimed intangible property held by a person who is not the owner is also handled differently.

Any person who, as a private citizen, finds property whose owner is unknown and who wishes to claim the property must first report the find to the chief law enforcement officer of the governmental entity with jurisdiction over the location where the property was found. The finder must have the property appraised and must publish notice of the find at least twice. The chief law enforcement officer may require the finder to surrender the property while these steps are being taken. Once the requirements have been met and at least 60 days have passed, the found property may be released to the finder. If the property is valued at more than \$25, the finder must also pay a fee to the treasurer of the governmental entity handling the found property. That fee is either \$5, or 10 percent of the appraised value of the property, whichever is greater.

**Summary:** If the found property is cash, then the finder is not required to have its value appraised. The responsibility for publishing notice of the found property is moved to the governmental entity that has jurisdiction over the location where the property was found. The finder must reimburse the governmental entity for the cost of publication. The handling fee paid by a private citizen to claim found property is changed to a flat fee of \$10. If the value of the property is less than the cost of publication, then the governmental entity does not have to publish notice, and the finder does not have to pay the handling fee.

### Votes on Final Passage:

House 97 0  
Senate 47 0

**Effective:** July 27, 1997