

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Olympia Washington

BilAnalysis

BilNo. HB 1166

Amount collected by govt/handling found property  
Brief title

Public Arg: 1/29/97

Reps. Romero/D. Schmidt/Scott  
Sponsor

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**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 sheriff. Other procedures govern the handling of unclaimed property held by museums or historical societies. Unclaimed intangible property 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 where the property was found. The finder must then undertake a series of prescribed steps to find the owner. The chief law enforcement officer may require the finder to surrender the property while these steps are being undertaken. Once the requirements have been met, the found property may be released to the finder. If the property's value is 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**

The handling fee paid by a private citizen to claim found property valued at more than \$25 is changed to a flat fee of \$5. No change is made to the handling of other found or unclaimed property.

**FISCAL NOTE:** Requested 1/27/97.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill passed.