

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SHB 1166

---

As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Government Operations, March 21, 1997

**Title:** An act relating to property.

**Brief Description:** Establishing procedures for handling found property.

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

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Government Operations: 3/21/97 [DP].

---

### SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators McCaslin, Chair; Hale, Vice Chair; Anderson, Haugen, Horn, Patterson and Swanson.

**Staff:** Eugene Green (786-7405)

**Background:** 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 that has jurisdiction over where the property was found. The finder must have the property appraised, and 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 undertaken. 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 of Bill:** 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.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Testimony For:** The onus of publication should be on the governmental unit. The handling fee for the government should be a flat fee, not a percentage of value. This bill will encourage more people to be honest.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Lorri Trimble (pro).