

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5261

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Health & Long-Term Care, March 4, 1997

Title: An act relating to utilizing drivers' licenses and identicards to prevent welfare fraud.

Brief Description: Providing safeguards to prevent using drivers' licenses and identicards to commit welfare fraud.

Sponsors: Senators Hargrove, Winsley and Long.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 2/25/97, 3/4/97 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5261 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Deccio, Chair; Wood, Vice Chair; Benton, Strannigan and Wojahn.

Staff: Joanne Conrad (786-7472)

Background: New technology, called "biometrics," enables positive identification of individuals through use of such things as encoding of scanned finger images. This type of identification is currently being used in corporate security, law enforcement, and fraud prevention. Los Angeles County utilizes biometric identification for welfare fraud prevention.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Attorney General's office is responsible for a study to evaluate and review the use of finger-imaging identification systems, and to examine possible costs and savings of such a system in Washington State.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The requirement for the Department of Social and Health Services to use a Department of Licensing electronic finger scan driver's license for welfare fraud prevention is removed. Instead, a study is required to evaluate the use and possible costs/savings of such a system.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Many states are using new, electronic digital identification to prevent fraud.

Testimony Against: Legal immigrants and undocumented aliens may be harmed by requiring this new type of identification.

Testified: Tim Schellberg, Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs; Dan La Roche, Douglas County Sheriff; Kathleen Russell, Washington Association of Churches.