

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5451

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

Title: An act relating to domestic relations.

Brief Description: Notifying applicants for a marriage license of relevant domestic abuse laws.

Sponsors: Senators Wojahn, Deccio, Fairley, Prentice, Thibaudeau, Fraser, Benton and Kohl.

Brief History:

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

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Deccio, Chair; Wood, Vice Chair; Fairley, Franklin and Wojahn.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Benton and Strannigan.

Staff: Jonathan Seib (786-7427)

Background: Domestic violence continues to be a leading cause of death and injury for American women. Many believe that cultural factors contribute to the prevalence of abuse, and that improved public education may help reduce violence in the home

Summary of Bill: Warning language is added to the application for marriage license to inform applicants regarding their legal rights in the state of Washington, and of the consequences of criminal acts of abuse.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This bill represents good public health policy. Pierce County has voluntarily done what the bill would require, and it has worked well. The warning identifies domestic violence as a crime to some who might otherwise think of it as normal, and serves notice that a marriage license is not a hitting license. Domestic violence is a significant problem and any effort to prevent it is worthwhile. Other states have successfully implemented this type of program.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Kathy Pearsall-Stipek, Pierce County Auditor; Kris White, Maureen Faust, Washington State Medical Association Alliance; Dr. Richard Harvey, Washington State Medical Association; Kathleen Nelson.