

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5828

As Reported By House Committee On:
State Government

Title: An act relating to the Washington gift of life award.

Brief Description: Presenting a gift of life award.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on State & Local Government (originally sponsored by Senators B. Sheldon, Snyder, Franklin, Bauer, Rasmussen, Patterson, Fairley, Kohl-Welles, McAuliffe, Fraser, Prentice, Thibaudeau, Jacobsen, T. Sheldon and Spanel).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government: 3/23/99, 3/30/99 [DP].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Alters the Washington Gift of Life in form to an award.
- Requires organ procurement organizations to nominate six individuals to the Governor's office each year for the award.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives McMorris, Republican Co-Chair; Romero, Democratic Co-Chair; Campbell, Republican Vice Chair; Miloscia, Democratic Vice Chair; Dunshee; Haigh; Lambert and D. Schmidt.

Staff: Scott MacColl (786-7106).

Background:

The Washington Gift of Life medal is awarded to persons who donate all or part of a human body upon or after death. The medal was established in 1998 consisting of inscribed bronze, and is awarded by the Governor.

An organ procurement organization is defined as any accredited or certified organ or eye bank.

Application for a Gift of Life medal must be made to the Governor's office by the family of an organ donor, or by an organ procurement organization on behalf of the person or family members. Eligibility is determined and the medal is presented by the organ procurement organization.

Summary of Bill:

The Washington Gift of Life is altered in form to an award, as opposed to a medal. The organ procurement organization nominates six individuals per year, and the awards are to be presented to representative families annually by the Governor's office in coordination with the organ procurement organization.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This legislation is in response to a constituent that receive a donated kidney and wants to thank the family of the donor. The award is to recognize individuals and families that have donated, and to raise awareness about the donation of vital organs.

Implementation of the 1998 legislation (the Gift of Life medal) had problems with privacy issues of both donors and recipients. The Department of Health worked with Senate staff and donor organizations to ensure confidentiality. There are 1600 donations each year, and the medals in the original legislation cost about \$15 dollars each. Awards are currently being given out (not as medals) by the organ organizations once a year, however 'Life Center Northwest' didn't budget for the medal this year. Therefore, no medals have been awarded yet.

This legislation would make it an award, with a ceremony in the rotunda building. It also streamlines the process, and reduces the cost. The state will rely on the organ organizations to nominate the six recipients each year. Since the organ procurement organizations already have a once a year ceremony, the state has the opportunity to plug into that system, but have the ceremony in the rotunda.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Betty Sheldon, prime sponsor; and Patty Hayes, Department of Health.