

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5202

As Passed House:

April 6, 1999

Title: An act relating to qualifications for working for the county treasurer.

Brief Description: Preventing convicted embezzlers from working for the county treasurer.

Sponsors: Senators Loveland, Hale and Winsley.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Local Government: 3/25/99 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 4/6/99, 92-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows a county treasurer's office to deny employment based solely on a person's prior conviction or guilty plea for a felony involving theft or embezzlement, even if it occurred more than 10 years before seeking employment.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Mulliken, Republican Co-Chair; Scott, Democratic Co-Chair; Doumit, Democratic Vice Chair; Mielke, Republican Vice Chair; Edwards; Ericksen; Fisher and Fortunato.

Staff: Caroleen Dineen (786-7156).

Background:

A person generally may not be denied employment by the state of Washington or local governments based solely on a prior felony conviction. A person generally also may not be denied a permit, license, certificate or registration required to practice or engage in

a profession or occupation solely because of a felony conviction. The conviction, however, may be considered in these contexts.

Certain exceptions exist to this general rule. A person may be denied employment by state or local government agencies and may be denied a permit, license, certificate or registration because of a felony conviction if the:

- felony conviction relates to the position of employment or the occupation for which the permit, license, certificate or registration is sought; and
- time elapsed since the felony conviction is fewer than 10 years.

A person also may be denied educational certification or school district employment because of a guilty plea or conviction for specified child-related felony offenses, regardless of the time elapsed since the guilty plea or conviction.

Summary of Bill:

A new exception to the general rule regarding felony convictions is added. A person may be denied employment with the county treasurer's office because of a felony guilty plea or felony conviction involving embezzlement or theft, even if the time elapsed since the guilty plea or conviction is equal to or greater than 10 years.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Handling county funds is a sacred trust. An incident with an employee in the county treasurer's office who had been convicted of embezzlement prompted Spokane County to ask for this bill. This bill promotes the safety of public funds and has the support of the county treasurers.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Darwin Parker, Benton County Treasurer, Washington State Association of County Treasurers; and Doug Lasher, Clark County Treasurer, Washington State Association of County Treasurers.