

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1613

As Reported by House Committee On:
Criminal Justice & Corrections

Title: An act relating to submission of unidentified persons information.

Brief Description: Providing a time limit for the transmittal of unidentified persons information.

Sponsors: Representatives Romero and Schindler; by request of Washington State Patrol.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Criminal Justice & Corrections: 2/14/01, 2/21/01 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the county coroner or medical examiner to forward the dental examination records of unidentified human remains to the Washington State Patrol (WSP) within 30 days of the date the remains are discovered.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Ballasiotes, Republican Co-Chair; O'Brien, Democratic Co-Chair; Ahern, Republican Vice Chair; Lovick, Democratic Vice Chair; Cairnes, Kagi, Kirby and Morell.

Staff: Matthew Zuchetto (786-7291).

Background:

When unidentified human remains are found, a county coroner or medical examiner attempts to identify the remains. If the coroner or medical examiner is unable to identify the remains, a qualified dentist then attempts to identify the remains by way of a dental examination. If the human remains are still unidentifiable, the coroner or medical examiner forwards the dental examination records of the unidentified remains to the WSP. The dental examination records are then entered into the WSP's dental identification system.

The dental identification system stores the dental examination records and compares the records with other dental records filed by law enforcement authorities of unidentified human remains.

Summary of Bill:

The dental examination records of unidentified human remains must be forwarded to the WSP for entry into the dental identification system within 30 days of the date the remains are found.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: In some instances, which have been few and far between, the county coroner has failed to submit dental examination records of unidentified human remains to the WSP in a timely manner. It is critical to have timely submission of the dental examination records so the state patrol can resolve cases of missing persons. It is in the interest of public safety to do so. This bill largely reflects the current practice, but there may be a few exceptions where there is not timely submission and this bill ensures those exceptions will not occur.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Captain Eric Robertson, Washington State Patrol; and Debbie Wilke, Coroners and Medical Examiners and Forensic Investigations Council.