

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESB 5954

As Reported by House Committee On:
State Government

Title: An act relating to obsolete racial terminology.

Brief Description: Updating obsolete language.

Sponsors: Senators Shin, Roach, Oke, Costa, Patterson, Hargrove, T. Sheldon, Hochstatter, Eide and Jacobsen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government: 2/21/02, 3/1/02 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill
(As Amended by House Committee)

- Requires use of the term "Asian" instead of "Oriental" when referring to persons of Asian descent.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Romero, Chair; Miloscia, Vice Chair; McMorris, Ranking Minority Member; McDermott, Schindler, Schmidt and Upthegrove.

Staff: Bree Ramage (786-7617).

Background:

Some Washington laws refer to people of Asian descent as "Oriental."

Summary of Amended Bill:

State and local statutes, codes, rules, regulations, and other official documents enacted after July 1, 2002 are required to use the term "Asian" instead of "Oriental" when referring to persons of Asian descent. Use of the term "Oriental" is prohibited.

In the statute requiring contractors for public works projects for first class cities to actively solicit bids from qualified minority businesses, "Orientals" is changed to "Asians," "Spanish Americans" is changed to "Hispanics," and references to "he" or "his" are changed to "the contractor."

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill:

Clarifies that only state and local statutes, codes, rules, regulations, and other official documents enacted after July 1, 2002 are required to use the term "Asian" instead of "Oriental." Changes the reference of "Spanish Americans" to "Hispanics" in the statute requiring contractors for public works projects to actively solicit bids from qualified minority businesses.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: The bill takes effect on July 1, 2002.

Testimony For: The use of the word "Oriental" is pejorative. This is an important bill for Asian Americans' self respect. Washington should take a leadership role in valuing the opinions of its residents from diverse backgrounds.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Shin, prime sponsor; and Camille Beck