
State Government Committee

HB 2926

Brief Description: Establishing the state library in the office of the secretary of state.

Sponsors: Representatives Clements and Grant.

Brief Summary of Bill

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Creates a state library in the office of the Secretary of State. |
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Hearing Date: 2/22/02

Staff: Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

Background:

The 1853 Organic Act that created the Territory of Washington provided for the establishment of a Territorial Library. When statehood was achieved in 1889, one of the first acts of the 1889-90 Legislature was to establish the Washington State Library (library). The purpose of the Territorial Library was to serve the government's information needs. This has continued to be the primary mission of the library. Its mission today is as follows:

As the corporate library for Washington State Government, we deliver information services to the legislature and state government entities as they develop and carry out public policy; and

As a leader in information policy, we partner with libraries and other entities to provide ready and equitable public access to information.

The five major functions of the library include the following:

- 1) Provide reference and research support to the legislature and state government agencies;
- 2) Serve as a central depository for current and retrospective collections of state and federal documents, newspapers, and state historical information;
- 3) Support the establishment, development, and coordination of local library service

statewide;

- 4) Provide library services to residents and staff of correctional institutions, psychiatric hospitals, and institutions for the developmentally disabled; and
- 5) Provide online access to state and local government information.

During the 2000 legislative session, the Legislature directed the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (Institute) to study the mission, programs, and usage of the state library in coordination with the Department of General Administration's space utilization study. The Institute's approach to the study focused on future options, and key questions included:

- Are there options for redefining the roles and functions of the library?
- What value can the library add to the delivery of information to the legislature and state government agencies?
- Is the current location of the library on the capitol campus essential to its effective operations?

The Institute found that the library could add value by making significant changes to information delivery, purchasing online content, and offering references services and training based on sound business practices. The Institute also noted that the library book collection was out of date and that the library's presence on capitol campus was not necessary for effective delivery of information to state government. As a result of the study, the Institute made the following recommendations:

- Accelerate the move from print to online content by joining a larger purchasing unit with the publicly funded academic libraries.
- Focus the library's activities more sharply than they are today. Implementing a limited market system by instituting fees for service would help clarify the relative value of services for users.
- Implement a more aggressive book "weeding" campaign.
- Reduce the physical presence of the library on the capitol campus and develop more appropriate space for technical and service functions elsewhere.

Included in the Institute's study was a sample survey regarding library services, and survey information indicated that the library was not widely used by government entities. This and the current revenue shortfalls of the state resulted in a recommendation by the Governor to eliminate the library.

Summary of Bill:

A state library is established in the office of the Secretary of State. The state librarian is the chief executive officer and is responsible and accountable for the following functions:

- Managing and administering the state library;
- Exerting leadership in information access and the development of library services;

- Acquiring library materials, equipment, and supplies, and assisting the legislature, state agencies, other libraries in cost-effective purchase of information resources;
- Employing and terminating personnel;
- Entering into agreements to implement the mission, goals, and objectives of the library;
- Maintaining a library to effectively provide library and information services to the legislature, state officials and state employees;
- Serving as the depository for newspapers published in the state;
- Promoting and facilitating electronic access to public information and services;
- Collecting and distributing copies of state publications;
- Providing for the sale of library material;
- Providing advisory services to state agencies regarding information needs;
- Providing for library and information service to residents and staff of state-supported residential institutions;
- Serving as an interlibrary loan, information, reference, and referral resource for all libraries in the state.

The state librarian is also authorized to grant librarians' certificates and to establish rules associated with examinations relating to the granting of certificates.

Statute regarding the State Library Commission and its duties are repealed.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Governance of the state library is transferred from the State Library Commission to the Secretary of State, and the State Library Commission is abolished. The Secretary of State is authorized to make rules for the purposes of the state library and the state librarian is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the Secretary of State. Additional duties are assigned to the state librarian, including: establishing common format and agency index standards; assisting in establishing and developing library services; conducting studies and surveys aimed to improve statewide library access and service; and accepting and expending grants. Numerous technical changes related to the functional transfer of the state library to the Secretary of State are also made.

Rulemaking Authority: No express authority.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 15, 2002.

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