

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 6600

As Passed Senate, February 14, 2002

Title: An act relating to authorizing unclassified position appointments in city or town police departments.

Brief Description: Authorizing unclassified position appointments in city or town police departments.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Labor, Commerce & Financial Institutions (originally sponsored by Senator Prentice).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor, Commerce & Financial Institutions: 1/29/02, 1/31/02 [DPS].
Passed Senate: 2/14/02, 46-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE & FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6600 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Keiser, Vice Chair; Deccio, Fairley, Franklin, Gardner, Hochstatter, Rasmussen, Regala and Winsley.

Staff: Matthew Adams (786-7784)

Background: Cities and towns having a full-paid police department are subject to the Civil Service for City Police Act. The act does not apply, however, to cities and towns that provide for civil service in their police departments by local charter.

Among other provisions, the act requires cities and towns to have a three-member civil service commission. The commission is responsible for adopting rules and regulations that govern examinations, personnel administration, hearings and investigations, and employment classifications.

The Legislature has authorized unclassified employees in county sheriff's offices. Currently, unclassified employees are not authorized in city or town police departments.

Summary of Bill: Unclassified employees are authorized in city or town police departments. Procedures for the designation of unclassified position assignments are established.

The classified civil service includes all certified police officers and all full-paid employees of a municipal police department. Unclassified positions must include a certain number of individuals appointed as police chief and the executive staff personnel, including the assistant chief, deputy chief, bureau commander, and administrative assistant or secretary to a department with six or more commissioned officers.

The police chief must make the initial selection of unclassified positions and notify the Civil Service Commission. Any changes to the chief's designation must be made with the concurrence of the chief, mayor or city administrator, and the commission. These requirements do not apply to cities and towns where the chief is a mandated civil service position.

All appointments to and promotions in a police department must be made solely on merit, efficiency, and fitness. This requirement does not apply to county sheriff's employees who are transferred from an unincorporated area of the county to an annexed or incorporated city or town.

The procedures for designating classified and unclassified employees apply to the reinstatement, transfer, suspension, or discharge of any employee who is not holding an exempt position.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: It is essential for the police chief to have confidence in his or her executive staff. This bill creates a tool for team building.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Mike King, Anacortes Police/WASPC; Fred Walser, Sultan Police/WASPC.

House Amendment(s): First, the number of positions that may be exempt from civil service in municipal police departments is modified. For example, if the police chief of a department with six or more commissioned officers has been made exempt, the civil service system includes all "full paid employees" except the chief and a specified number of additional positions. Second, a conflict between SSB 6600 and an existing law specifying which police department employees are in classified civil service and which may be in the unclassified services is eliminated. Finally, a section dealing with police department employees serving in 1937 is repealed.