

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 6660

As Passed Senate, February 18, 2002

Title: An act relating to protection of personal information about law enforcement officers and their families.

Brief Description: Protecting personal information about law enforcement officers and their families.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Labor, Commerce & Financial Institutions (originally sponsored by Senators Prentice, Long, Kastama, Rossi, McAuliffe, McDonald, Costa, Hale, Keiser, Gardner, Oke and Rasmussen).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor, Commerce & Financial Institutions: 1/29/02, 2/6/02 [DPS].
Passed Senate: 2/18/02, 46-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE & FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6660 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Keiser, Vice Chair; Benton, Fairley, Franklin, Gardner, Honeyford, Rasmussen, Regala, West and Winsley.

Staff: Matthew Adams (786-7784)

Background: Current law exempts certain personal information from public disclosure. For example, the Legislature has found that employees have a right to privacy with respect to their personal information in files maintained by any public agency.

In Washington, there is growing concern about the privacy of personal information. Recent events have included an individual who posted, on his website, maps to police officers' homes, together with home email addresses, and social security numbers.

Summary of Bill: Provisions are added to protect personal information about police officers and their families. Information that is necessary for the effective operation of a law enforcement agency is exempt from public inspection and copying when the information is personal to officers and their families, or when the information could easily lead to the discovery of personal information.

Protected information includes a police officer's residential address and telephone number, public employment record, property and tax records, and certain financial information. Public salaries are not exempt from disclosure.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: There is no legitimate public interest in personal information about police officers and their families. With the proliferation of the internet and various safety concerns, personal information must be protected from public disclosure.

Testimony Against: Law enforcement officers are not a different class of society. This bill needs clarification because it is overly broad and commercially disadvantages an officer's ability to obtain credit.

Testified: PRO: Dave Reichart, King County Sheriff; Steve Eggert, King County Deputy Sheriff. CON: Rowland Thompson, Allied Daily Newspapers of WA; Diana Kramer, WA Newspaper Publishers Assn. CONCERNS: Cliff Webster, Associated Credit Bureaus.