
SENATE BILL 6701

State of Washington 57th Legislature

2002 Regular Session

By Senators Stevens, T. Sheldon, West, Hale, Zarelli, Hewitt, Sheahan, Honeyford, Morton, Long, Swecker, Hochstatter, Oke and Parlette

Read first time 01/28/2002. Referred to Committee on State & Local Government.

1 AN ACT Relating to creating the office of ombudsman for effective
2 government; adding a new chapter to Title 43 RCW; and providing an
3 expiration date.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that it is essential
6 that state government operate as efficiently as possible. In an effort
7 to accomplish this goal, the legislature further finds that it is
8 necessary to employ extraordinary means to ensure that waste and
9 inefficiency are minimized or eliminated. The legislature also finds
10 that it is critical that all state agencies and their employees work
11 tirelessly to ensure that the state has an excellent climate for
12 business expansion and retention. The legislature further finds that
13 the lack of compassionate and helpful work by state agencies and state
14 employees can unacceptably hinder the economic health of the state.
15 Additionally, the legislature finds that promoting a work ethic in
16 which helping and serving the public is the highest priority will help
17 foster a friendly business climate.

18 Therefore, the legislature declares that a temporary position of
19 ombudsman for effective government must be established to better serve

1 the citizens of the state and to ensure continued economic stability
2 and vitality of the state. The ombudsman must seek to ensure that all
3 employees of the state treat businesses and citizens consistently and
4 compassionately across agencies and jurisdictions in order to ensure
5 certainty and consistency for planning and economic development.

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** There is created an office of the ombudsman
7 for effective government within the office of the governor for the
8 purpose of identifying system issues and responses for the governor and
9 the legislature to act upon. The ombudsman reports directly to the
10 governor and the appropriate legislative committees as determined by
11 the leadership of the house of representatives and the senate.

12 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) Subject to confirmation by the senate,
13 the governor must appoint an ombudsman who must be a person of
14 recognized judgment, independence, objectivity, and integrity, and must
15 be qualified by training or experience, or both, in private and public
16 sector management and operations. Prior to the appointment, the
17 governor must consult with the legislature regarding the selection of
18 the ombudsman.

19 (2) The ombudsman holds office for a term of three years and
20 continues to hold office until reappointed or until his or her
21 successor is appointed. The governor may remove the ombudsman only for
22 neglect of duty, misconduct, or inability to perform duties. Any
23 vacancy must be filled by similar appointment for the remainder of the
24 unexpired term.

25 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** The ombudsman must perform the following
26 duties:

27 (1) Examine the operations of each state agency responsible for
28 issuing permits for any activities within the state.

29 (2) Recommend changes, based upon its examination under subsection
30 (1) of this section, for statutory, administrative code, or agency
31 operational standards or protocols that will streamline permitting
32 processes and enhance customer relations.

33 (3) Monitor and report on the implementation of executive orders
34 related to increased government efficiency and improved employee
35 interaction with customers.

1 (4) Focus initially on streamlining the environmental permit
2 process to ensure reasonable, expeditious permit processing.

3 (5) Regularly consult with and advise the governor's business
4 advocate.

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** The joint legislative audit and review
6 committee must support the work of the ombudsman, including providing
7 staff and office space.

8 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** Sections 1 through 5 of this act constitute
9 a new chapter in Title 43 RCW.

10 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** Sections 1 through 5 of this act expire June
11 30, 2008.

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