

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5035

As Passed Senate, February 25, 2005

Title: An act relating to forensic pathology.

Brief Description: Revising the forensic pathology program.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Thibaudeau, Brandland and Franklin).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 1/26/05, 2/10/05 [DPS].

Passed Senate: 2/25/05, 46-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5035 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Keiser, Chair; Thibaudeau, Vice Chair; Deccio, Ranking Minority Member; Benson, Brandland, Franklin, Johnson, Kastama, Kline, Parlette and Poulsen.

Staff: Sharon Swanson (786-7447)

Background: The State Forensic Pathology Fellowship Program has joint oversight with the University of Washington School of Medicine and the Washington State Forensic Investigation Council over the Bureau of Forensic Laboratory Services. The council, in consultation with the Chief of the Washington State Patrol, controls the operation and establishes policies of the Bureau of Forensic Laboratory Services. The program is funded from the general fund death investigation account.

The fellowship position has been difficult to fill in recent years and has been vacant during the past four years.

Summary of Bill: The fellowship program is eliminated. The Washington State Forensic Investigations Council is charged with oversight of the state forensic pathologist program.

The pathologist program is funded by the death investigations account.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Testimony For: The fellowship has not been filled in the past four years. There is a need to reassess the situation because the current program is not working. Local counties are not currently receiving any forensic assistance from the state level at this time.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Debbie Wilkie, Association of County Officials; Martha Reed, Washington Association of Medical Examiners and Coroners / Mason County Coroner.

House Amendment(s): The amendment eliminates the requirement that the State Treasurer make disbursements to the Forensic Investigations Council to fund the state forensic program. Language is also added clarifying that the Forensics Investigations Council will be responsible for oversight of any state forensic pathology program authorized by the legislature.

Passed House: 98-0.