

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1069

As Passed House:
February 25, 2011

Title: An act relating to the disposition of unclaimed remains.

Brief Description: Regarding the disposition of unclaimed remains.

Sponsors: Representatives Alexander and Moeller.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Local Government: 1/14/11, 1/21/11 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/25/11, 97-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Modifies provisions governing the disposition of unclaimed remains by allowing the county coroner or medical examiner to establish a preferred funeral home for the disposition of unclaimed remains.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Takko, Chair; Tharinger, Vice Chair; Angel, Ranking Minority Member; Asay, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Fitzgibbon, Smith, Springer and Upthegrove.

Staff: Miranda Leskinen (786-7291) and Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

Background:

Under current law, the county coroner entrusts the remains of individuals who die without plans and lack anyone to provide for the disposition of his or her body to a funeral home in the county where the body is found. Entrustment of unclaimed remains is made on a rotational basis as established by the coroner in consultation with funeral home or mortuary representatives in the county (or counties) involved. The rotation plan must treat equally all funeral homes or mortuaries wishing to participate.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Summary of Bill:

The county coroner or medical examiner, using the qualified bidding process, may establish a preferred funeral home for the disposition of unclaimed remains from individuals who die without plans and lack anyone to provide for the disposition of his or her body.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This issue first arose when the Franklin County Coroner wanted to put out a request for proposal to secure transportation services and services required of funeral homes. Existing law prohibits this practice.

The state already uses competitive bidding as standard practice in making the most of taxpayer dollars when securing services. Affording county coroners and medical examiners the option of using competitive bidding to secure services provides them flexibility in deciding what works best for their county, which is especially important to small counties with limited resources.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Debbie Wilke, Washington Association of County Officials.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.