

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5575

As Reported By House Committee On:
Health Care

Title: An act relating to anatomical gift by persons under the age of eighteen.

Brief Description: Allowing persons at least sixteen years of age to make anatomical gifts if a parent or guardian signs the document of gift.

Sponsors: Senators Sheldon, Gaspard, Moyer, Wood, Finkbeiner and Winsley; by request of Governor Lowry.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care: 3/28/95, 3/31/95 [DP].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Dyer, Chairman; Backlund, Vice Chairman; Hymes, Vice Chairman; Cody, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Campbell; Casada; Conway; Crouse; Kessler; Morris; Sherstad and Skinner.

Staff: Antonio Sanchez (786-7383).

Background: The demand for donor organs and body parts far exceeds the supply. Nationally, as many as 27,000 patients are waiting for transplants of critical internal organs. Currently, in Washington State, there are hundreds of people waiting for a donated eye. Each year over 15,000 people become potential donors nationally. Only 4,500 actually become donors.

This shortfall in supply of healthy organs has brought serious concern to patients and families of those who would benefit from organ donations as well as physicians and health facilities providing transplant services.

The Uniform Anatomical Gift Act was enacted in Washington in 1969. In 1988, and again in 1993, the Washington State Legislature amended the act to make it easier for donors to make a gift. In addition, it was made illegal to sell or buy body parts.

In the spring of 1994, the YMCA, through their youth and government program, sponsored the 47th Youth Legislature. Young people from across the state convened a mock legislative session and addressed current issues through this experiential learning event. One of the issues tackled by the young legislators was the need for anatomical gifts.

Summary of Bill: An individual who is at least 16 years of age is allowed to make an anatomical gift. A person who is under the age of 18 but is at least 16 years of age may designate a gift of an organ or organs through use of a document signed by the donor, including the document imprinted on a donor's motor vehicle operator's license, if the document is also signed by a parent or guardian. If the consent is not obtained, the gift will become valid when the individual reaches the age of 18.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This bill was brought to us by the Youth Legislature. It gives young adolescents an opportunity to provide an anatomical gift and in turn allows them to help solve the big problem of the lack of anatomical gifts nationwide.

Testimony Against:

Testified: Senator Sheldon, prime sponsor.