

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5310

As of January 23, 1997

Title: An act relating to the joint legislative committee on information technology.

Brief Description: Creating the joint legislative committee on information technology.

Sponsors: Senators Finkbeiner, Haugen, Heavey, Benton, Franklin and Winsley.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Energy & Utilities: 1/27/97.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & UTILITIES

Staff: Diane Smith (786-7410)

Background: In 1987, the Legislature created the Department of Information Services (DIS) and the Information Services Board (ISB) to provide coordinated planning, management, and delivery of state information services. In 1992, the Legislature increased DIS' oversight responsibilities through the passage of the Information Technology Act and mandated a strategic planning process. Prior to the creation of DIS, information services had been provided by several different state agencies. ISB replaced the Data Processing Authority, which previously had provided an oversight role. In 1995, the Legislative Budget Committee (now Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee) conducted a sunset review of DIS and ISB. In 1996, the Legislature repealed the statute that would have discontinued DIS and ISB.

DIS has two major functions: (1) It is a provider of computing, telecommunications, and bulk purchasing services to other agencies of state and local government on a full-cost recovery basis; and (2) as staff to the ISB, it conducts and coordinates strategic planning for information technology, develops statewide information technology policies, assesses funding requests, provides oversight of agency information system development projects, and approves agency acquisitions of information technology equipment.

The ISB consists of a 13-member board (enlarged from nine in 1996). Eight members are appointed by the Governor, one of whom must be a representative of higher education, one of whom must be a representative of an agency under a statewide elected official other than the Governor, and two of whom must be representatives of the private sector. One member represents the judicial branch. One member is, or is appointed by, the Superintendent of Public Instruction. One member represents the House of Representatives and one member represents the Senate. One member is the Director of DIS.

Among the duties of ISB are: to develop standards governing the acquisition and disposition of equipment, software, and purchased services; to acquire equipment or delegate such authority to state agencies; to develop statewide technical policies and standards; and to provide direction concerning statewide strategic planning.

It has been estimated that the 40 largest state agencies will spend approximately \$1.5 billion on information technology during the 1997-1999 biennium (ten agencies account for over 80 percent of these expenditures). This includes salaries and benefits for information technology staff, purchase and depreciation of equipment, the costs of telecommunications, including telephone and data transmission, and purchases and personal services. Because statewide spending on information will increase substantially during the next decade, it has been suggested that the Legislature should become more aware and knowledgeable of information technology, and play a more proactive role in creating and monitoring information technology for the state.

Summary of Bill: The Legislature recognizes that information technology, properly used, can be the state's primary tool both for improving delivery of services and for containing the costs of those services. In order for the Legislature to develop a more comprehensive view of its information investments, a long-range technology vision and strategies to improve this vision, the Joint Legislative Committee on Information Technology is created to oversee the direction, management, and expenditures of the state's information technology programs and activities.

The Joint Legislative Committee on Information Technology consists of four Senators and four Representatives. The Senate members are appointed by the President of the Senate and the House of Representatives members are appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. Not more than two members from each house are from the same political party. All members must be appointed before the close of the 1997 session of the Legislature and before the close of each regular session during the odd-numbered year thereafter. Members are subject to confirmation. Members of the committee who cease to be members of the Legislature must also cease to be members of the committee. Vacancies are filled by appointment by the remaining members and the vacancies are filled from the same political party and the same house as the member whose seat was vacated.

The members of the committee serve without additional compensation, but are reimbursed while attending sessions of the committee. All expenses incurred by the committee are paid upon voucher forms, which may be drawn on funds appropriated for the committee. However, the Legislature may authorize the committee to draw on funds appropriated for legislative expenses. The committee appoints its own chair, vice-chair, and other officers.

The Joint Legislative Committee on Information Technology must examine, on a continuing basis, the status of information technology in state government, and recommend to the Legislature ways to improve the management and use of information technology in state government. The committee may: conduct oversight hearings and investigations as necessary to inform the Legislature about specific information technology activities or needs; assist legislators and others in developing legislation; present reports to the Legislature; and recommend and introduce legislation to improve the effectiveness and coordination of information technology programs or projects or to terminate these programs or projects.

The Joint Legislative Committee on Information Technology must also, with the Department of Information Services and the Information Services Board, review and examine: major proposals and recommendations related to information technology; action plans proposed by state agencies to achieve information technology goals contained in the state strategic information technology plan adopted by the Information Services Board; and budget estimates

proposed by agencies to implement their action plans and make recommendations thereon to the appropriate legislative committees.

The Joint Legislative Committee on Information Technology may appoint an administrator, who assists in the committee's duties, and the committee may select and employ temporary and permanent personnel and fix their salaries. The administrator manages the committee's operations; assists the standing committees of the Legislature; and maintains a record of all work performed by the committee. The committee is exempt from the statutory provisions governing the Department of Information Services.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 23, 1997.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.