

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6300

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Financial Institutions, Insurance & Housing, February 4, 1998

Title: An act relating to public housing authorities in jurisdictions with populations over four hundred thousand.

Brief Description: Regulating housing authorities with populations over four hundred thousand.

Sponsors: Senators Prentice, Winsley, Kline, Patterson, Kohl, Fairley, Franklin, Heavey and Jacobsen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Financial Institutions, Insurance & Housing: 2/4/98.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS, INSURANCE & HOUSING

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Winsley, Chair; Benton, Vice Chair; Finkbeiner, Hale, Heavey, Kline and Prentice.

Staff: Joanne Conrad (786-7472)

Background: Under existing law, commissioners are appointed to serve on city and county housing authorities. Five commissioners serve for a term of five years. They receive no compensation, except for necessary expenses, including travel expenses. Three commissioners constitute a quorum.

Summary of Bill: For cities with populations over 400,000, the housing authority is expanded from five to seven commissioners, with specific representation designated: one representative each from labor, senior citizens, low income housing organizations, tenants residing in housing projects, and three representatives at large. Those representatives who are not at large are appointed from a list submitted to the mayor by the groups to be represented.

Commissioners serve for three-year terms, and may be reappointed only after a public hearing. Four commissioners constitute a quorum.

Self-dealing and conflicts of interest are prohibited. Commissioners (appointees and employees) cannot have an interest in any contract or property that is, or appears to be, in conflict with their duties. They cannot secure, or appear to secure, unwarranted privileges due to their position with the authority. They must maintain independent unprejudiced judgment, and cannot use their position for financial gain.

Housing authority commissioners (appointees and employees) cannot act on matters in which they have direct or indirect "financial or personal involvement." They must disclose in

writing any direct or indirect interests in housing project properties subject to action by the authority, and avoid participation in actions affecting such properties. Failure to disclose is misconduct in office.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Mismanagement, self-interest and entrenchment affects the work of the Seattle Housing Authority. A larger group of commissioners, with guaranteed representation by certain groups, would alleviate these problems.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Virginia Meyers, SSHP Advocates (pro); Don Wittenberger (pro).