

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5098

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
State & Local Government, February 3, 1999  
Ways & Means, March 3, 1999

**Title:** An act relating to the Washington State Women's Commission.

**Brief Description:** Creating the Washington State Women's Commission.

**Sponsors:** Senators Kohl-Welles, Winsley, Patterson, Long, Brown, Horn, Thibaudeau, Heavey, Spanel, Snyder, Hale, Prentice, Kline, Fraser, McAuliffe and Costa.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** State & Local Government: 1/25/98, 2/3/99 [DPS].  
Ways & Means: 3/2/99, 3/3/99 [DP2S, DNPS].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5098 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Patterson, Chair; Gardner, Vice Chair; Haugen, Horn, Kline and McCaslin.

**Staff:** Eugene Green (786-7405)

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

**Majority Report:** That Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 5098 be substituted therefor, and the second substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Loveland, Chair; Brown, Vice Chair; Fairley, Fraser, Kline, Kohl-Welles, Rasmussen, B. Sheldon, Snyder, Spanel, Thibaudeau, Winsley and Wojahn.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass substitute.

Signed by Senators Honeyford, Roach, Rossi, West and Zarelli.

**Staff:** Steve Jones (786-7440)

**Background:** In 1971, Governor Evans, by executive order, created the Washington State Women's Council. The 1977 Legislature created the Washington State Women's Commission as a statutory replacement to the Washington State Women's Council. The commission became subject to Referendum 40 and did not come into existence due to disapproval by the voters. In response to this disapproval, Governor Ray rescinded the executive order for the Women's Council.

**Summary of Second Substitute Bill:** The Washington State Women's Commission is established within the Governor's office. The commission is composed of nine members appointed by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate. All members serve at the pleasure of the Governor for staggered three-year terms. Two members of the Senate and two members of the House of Representatives, appointed from the major political parties, serve as advisory members. The Governor shall consider nominations for membership based upon maintaining a balanced and diverse distribution of ethnic, geographic, sex, age, socio-economic status, and occupational representation, where practicable.

The Governor must appoint an executive director of the commission, who in turn appoints the staff.

The commission is authorized to: 1) Examine and define issues pertaining to the rights and needs of all women and make recommendations to the Governor, the Legislature, and state agencies concerning desirable changes in programs, laws, and administrative practices; 2) advise state agencies on developing and implementing comprehensive and coordinated policies and programs focusing on the special needs of women; 3) gather data and disseminate information; 4) secure appropriate and reasonable assistance from all state agencies; and 5) establish relationships with the public and private organizations to promote equal opportunity for women. The primary function of the commission is to examine issues relating to women's health care and the economic status of women.

The commission is empowered to receive and expend funds from private sources, which may not be applied to reduce or substitute state funds appropriated by the Legislature.

The commission terminates on June 30, 2005.

**Second Substitute Bill Compared to Substitute Bill:** The second substitute bill clarifies the primary function of the commission.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** An error was corrected on reporting of private donations.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Testimony For:** Forty states have a commission on women. We are the only western state other than Alaska that doesn't have a women's commission. Initiative 200 is not affected. We still have many women's issues that need to be addressed: health; domestic violence; wage parity; access to education; child welfare; etc. More women are needed in leadership positions in government. Staff can be limited to two FTEs.

**Testimony Against:** Public funding should not be used to advance the political agenda of a special interest group. The voters of the state have rejected the establishment of a tax-

funded women's commission. Women and families will be better served by lower taxes and less government spending.

**Testified:** PRO: Senator Kohl-Wells, prime sponsor; Judy Turpin, AAUW; Majken Ryherd Keira, Washington Women United; Lonnie Johns-Brown, NOW; CON: Anne Ball, Concerned Women for America; Linda Terry; Kathryn Simpson; Maryann Connell.