
Commerce & Labor Committee

HB 2351

Brief Description: Regulating foreign contact centers.

Sponsors: Representatives Hudgins, Romero, Hinkle, Conway, Sullivan, Hunt and Morrell.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires contact center employees, upon request, to identify their employer's identity and location.
- Prohibits contact center employees in foreign countries from soliciting personal information from another party without the other party's disclosure and consent.
- Requires that, upon request, communications with contact centers in foreign countries be rerouted to the United States.
- Makes violations of these provisions unfair acts for purposes of applying the state Consumer Protection Act.

Hearing Date: 1/19/04

Staff: Jill Reinmuth (786-7134).

Background:

Neither federal law nor Washington law requires disclosure of call center locations or establishes other requirements pertaining to call center operations. Laws in other states are similarly silent.

Summary of Bill:

Upon request, employees of contact centers must identify themselves, their employer, their location, and if applicable, entities contracting with the contact center. In addition, upon request, communications with contact centers located in foreign countries must be rerouted to contact centers in the United States.

Employees of contact centers in foreign countries may not solicit personal information unless they inform the other parties that disclosure of such information is optional and the other parties consent to such disclosure. If telephonic communications are used, employees of such contact centers also must inform the other parties of their location in a foreign country and that the other parties may request that the communication be rerouted to a contact center in the United States.

The terms "contact center" and "personal information" are defined. A "contact center" is a physical or electronic operation that uses telephonic or electronic communications for specified activities such as soliciting sales, or taking orders or reservations. "Personal information" includes information such as a person's name, Social Security number, and credit or other financial information.

Violations of these provisions are unfair acts for purposes of applying the state Consumer Protection Act.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 15, 2004.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on July 1, 2009.