

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESB 5332

As Reported by House Committee On:
State Government Operations & Accountability

Title: An act relating to honoring the Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr..

Brief Description: Honoring the Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr.

Sponsors: Senators Kline, Franklin, Shin, Keiser, Weinstein, Poulsen, Thibaudeau, Prentice, Kohl-Welles, Eide, Finkbeiner, Rasmussen and Pridemore.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government Operations & Accountability: 3/18/05, 3/30/05 [DP].

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill

- Renames King County in honor of the Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ACCOUNTABILITY

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Haigh, Chair; Green, Vice Chair; Clements, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Hunt, McDermott, Miloscia and Sump.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Nixon, Ranking Minority Member; and Schindler.

Staff: Jim Morishima (786-7191).

Background:

King County was established on December 22, 1852, when Washington was still part of the Oregon Territory. The county was named after William Rufus Devane King, who was a long-tenured Senator from Alabama and Vice President of the United States under Franklin Pierce (King is the only Vice President ever to take the oath of office on foreign soil). King died shortly after assuming the office of Vice President on April 18, 1853.

On February 14, 1986, the King County Council renamed King County after the Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr. A similar change was not made in state law.

Summary of Bill:

King County is renamed in honor of the Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This bill honors someone who changed American history. King County was originally named after a slaveholder. King County passed a motion in 1986 to rename itself after the Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr., which made a lot of people very proud. King County has been operating under the assumption that it is named after Doctor King ever since. However, only the state has the legal right to officially re-name the county. If this bill passes, King County will be the only jurisdiction in the country named after Doctor King. People at home and abroad respect Doctor King's name.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Kline, prime sponsor; Larry Gossett, King County Council; and Tony Orange, Central Area Motivation Program and Seattle-King County National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.