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## Judiciary Committee

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### HB 2029

**Title:** An act relating to providing a referral resource for those seeking information and assistance for immigration and citizenship related matters.

**Brief Description:** Providing a referral resource for those seeking information and assistance for immigration and citizenship related matters.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Ortiz-Self, Ryu, Santos, Tarleton, Fey, Farrell, McBride, Wylie, Peterson, Kloba, Gregerson, Clibborn, Jinkins, Kagi, Bergquist, Ormsby, Hudgins, Stanford, Tharinger and Macri.

#### Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs the Human Rights Commission, in consultation with others, to establish a toll-free telephone hotline and web site with the capacity to refer callers and users to sources of information and assistance for immigration and citizenship related matters.
- Provides that all information revealing the identity of persons or entities requesting information is exempt from public disclosure.

**Hearing Date:** 2/14/17

**Staff:** Cece Clynch (786-7195).

#### Background:

##### Human Rights Commission.

The Washington State Human Rights Commission (Commission) consists of five members appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. The Commission is charged, under the Washington Law Against Discrimination (WLAD), with powers with respect to the elimination and prevention of discrimination against certain protected classes in: employment; credit and insurance transactions; places of public resort, accommodation, or amusement; and real property transactions. Complaints of discrimination under the WLAD may

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be filed with the Commission for investigation, elimination of any unfair practice by conference, conciliation, and persuasion, and administrative hearing.

The Commission is also charged, among other things, with:

- issuing publications and research as in its judgment will tend to promote good will and minimize or eliminate discrimination on the basis of a protected class;
- making technical studies as are appropriate to effectuate the purposes and policies of the WLAD and publishing and distributing these reports; and
- fostering good relations between minority and majority population groups of the state through seminars, conferences, educational programs, and other intergroup relations activities.

#### Citizenship and Immigration.

The federal government has jurisdiction over the terms and conditions for immigrants to reside in the United States (U.S.). Noncitizen immigrants living permanently in the U.S. have "immigrant status," and noncitizens who enter or stay in the U.S. on a temporary basis have "nonimmigrant status." Naturalization is the way that a person not born in the U.S. voluntarily becomes a U.S. citizen.

#### Public Records Act.

The Public Records Act (PRA) requires state and local agencies to make all public records available for public inspection and copying, unless a record falls within an exemption in the PRA or another statute that exempts or prohibits disclosure of specific information or records. To the extent required to prevent an unreasonable invasion of personal privacy interests, an agency must delete identifying details when it makes a public record available. A person's right to privacy is violated only if disclosure would be highly offensive to a reasonable person and is not of legitimate concern to the public. The PRA is liberally construed and its exemptions narrowly construed. If the PRA conflicts with any other law, the provisions of the PRA govern.

#### **Summary of Bill:**

The Human Rights Commission (Commission) must establish a toll-free telephone hotline and a web site with the capacity to refer callers and users to sources of information and assistance for immigration and citizenship related matters. In doing so, the Commission must consult with relevant state agencies and individuals or groups having experience and knowledge of immigration law and the provision of immigration and citizenship related assistance, including those with experience providing culturally appropriate services to populations that have traditionally been underserved or unserved.

An exemption is made in the PRA for all information revealing the identity of any person or entity requesting immigration and citizenship related information or assistance via the Commission's hotline or web site. Identifying information includes the person's or entity's name, address, phone number or other contact information, location, national origin or religion, and immigration or citizenship status.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on 2/9/17.

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