

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 2462

---

*As Reported By House Committee on:  
State Government*

**Title:** An act relating to accountability in state government.

**Brief Description:** Enhancing accountability in state government.

**Sponsor(s):** Representatives Pruitt, Bowman, Anderson, Franklin, Sprenkle, R. Meyers, Moyer, R. Fisher, Chandler, G. Fisher, Riley, Sheldon, Bray, Kremen, Ludwig, Spanel, J. Kohl, Cooper, H. Myers, Prentice, Valle, Basich, Morris, Rayburn, Dorn, Inslee, Horn, Orr, Rasmussen, Dellwo, Jacobsen, Ferguson, Paris, Winsley, Edmondson, Jones, Leonard, Ogden and Roland.

**Brief History:**

Reported by House Committee on:  
State Government, February 5, 1992, DPS.

---

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
STATE GOVERNMENT**

**Majority Report:** *The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass.* Signed by 6 members: Representatives Anderson, Chair; Pruitt, Vice Chair; R. Fisher; Grant; O'Brien; and Sheldon.

**Minority Report:** *Do not pass.* Signed by 4 members: Representatives McLean, Ranking Minority Member; Bowman, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chandler; and Moyer.

**Staff:** Linda May (786-7135).

**Background:** A number of state government entities perform various types of reviews of state agency programs and practices. Examples of entities who perform reviews are the Efficiency Commission, the Legislative Budget Committee (LBC), the state auditor, and agencies themselves. Each of these entities has its own methods and obligations for determining what kinds of reviews to perform and which agency or program to review.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** Greater Accountability. The Legislature finds that demand is growing for a new level of

accountability in government and that state government needs an integrated, comprehensive accountability system.

Definitions. A new section provides definitions of the terms "performance audit," "program evaluation," and "success measures."

Government Accountability Task Force. A new Government Accountability Task Force is created. Membership on the task force is as follows: four members to be appointed by the governor, one legislator from each caucus in the Legislature, the state auditor, the chair of the LBC, the director of the Office of Financial Management (OFM), the superintendent of public instruction, the chair of the Higher Education Coordinating Board, the commissioner of public lands, and the chair of the Transportation Commission. OFM will provide staff to the task force. The task force is to expire on June 30, 1998.

The major task assigned to the task force is development of an integrated, comprehensive program accountability system. Four specific responsibilities are assigned to the task force as part of meeting its major responsibility.

Office of Financial Management. OFM is to develop a state-wide program evaluation system. As part of developing this system, OFM is assigned a number of specific tasks. OFM is also to prepare a plan for the establishment of a strategic planning process for key functional areas of state government. Functional areas which must be accounted for in the plan are general government, health and human services, community and economic development, the environment and natural resources, transportation, K-12 education, and higher education. The bill establishes timelines for development, review, and approval of this plan.

The State Auditor. The state auditor is given the authority to conduct performance audits of state agency programs.

New Budget Responsibilities. Beginning in July, 1993, state agencies and the Legislature have new responsibilities regarding budget matters. The concept of program performance is added to the budget and accounting statutes. As part of their budget preparation process, agencies must develop goals and objectives for each major program in their budgets, and agencies must develop measures in an objective, measurable form to compare the results of programs against the established goals and objectives.

Neither house of the Legislature is to consider any bill or amendment authorizing an appropriation unless the bill or

amendment specifies goals or objectives for, and the desired outcome of, the appropriation.

***Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:*** The original bill changed the composition of, and assigned a number of new tasks to, the Efficiency Commission. In the substitute bill, the only change to the commission's statutes is an updating of current responsibilities. Instead, the new tasks are assigned in part to OFM and in part to a newly-created task force. The original bill assigned the strategic planning process to the governor and to other officials. This responsibility goes to OFM in the substitute bill. The original bill also called on the governor to develop additional plans regarding management practices and the structure of government; the substitute bill does not contain these requirements. The substitute bill also makes a number of minor editorial and date-related changes.

***Fiscal Note:*** Available. New fiscal note requested on February 6, 1992.

***Effective Date of Substitute Bill:*** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed, except for sections 10 through 12 of the bill, which take effect July 1, 1993.

***Testimony For:*** The state is a leader in financial accountability; what the public and policymakers want is a better way to see what they get for their dollars. Use of success measures will help to do this. Like the fiscal accountability effort of the 1980's, this will be a long-term effort and will require extensive collaboration. State employees think this effort is very important. The current management process is not working; broader ownership will help. This will help improve public perception of the quality of the work state employees perform. This accountability perspective is very important to the business community. The Legislature faces a tough budget problem this year, a problem made tougher by a lack of performance and accountability information. This will help to set up a mechanism to ensure measures are in place and evaluated consistently across the board.

***Testimony Against:*** The bill calls for the handling of a vast amount of data, and the state will need preparation to be able to do that. Primary opposition is to the creation of the task force, a new state entity. It would be better to assign responsibilities to existing entities and pay better attention to performance. The Legislature should have a larger role in development of the strategic plan. The bill implies an instantaneous change to the budget and

accounting system. This process will take many years to implement.

***Witnesses:*** Representative Wes Pruitt; Bob Graham, State Auditor; Eugene St. John, Washington Public Employees Association; and Clif Finch, Association of Washington Business (all in favor); and Lawrence Seale, Office of Financial Management (in favor and opposed).