

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 2647

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*As Reported By House Committee on:  
Human Services*

**Title:** An act relating to state employee safety at eastern and western state hospitals.

**Brief Description:** Commissioning a study to investigate the problems of and possible solutions to the increasing assaults on staff at eastern and western state hospitals.

**Sponsor(s):** Representatives D. Sommers, Franklin, Winsley, Leonard, Moyer, Padden, Mielke, Tate and Wang.

**Brief History:**

Reported by House Committee on:  
Human Services, February 5, 1992, DPS.

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**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
HUMAN SERVICES**

**Majority Report:** *The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass.* Signed by 11 members: Representatives Leonard, Chair; Riley, Vice Chair; Winsley, Ranking Minority Member; Tate, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Anderson; Beck; Brekke; Hargrove; Hochstatter; R. King; and H. Myers.

**Staff:** David Knutson (786-7146).

**Background:** Assaults against state employees at Eastern and Western State Hospitals result in time loss, staff turnover, and dangerous working conditions.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** The Department of Labor and Industries will study the causes and issues related to assaults of state employees at Eastern and Western State Hospitals. The department will report its findings and recommendations to the Legislature prior to the 1993 legislative session.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** A reference to increasing numbers of assaults against state employees is deleted. Additional groups are added to the study team, and references to criminal penalties and law enforcement participation in the study are removed. The appropriation

is changed from \$250,000 general fund-state to \$180,000 from the medical and accident funds.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested January 24, 1992.

**Appropriation:** \$180,000 is appropriated from the medical and accident funds.

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

**Testimony For:** Assaults against state employees at Eastern and Western State Hospitals result in injuries and time loss. The Department of Labor and Industries should study assaults at these institutions and develop recommendations to improve employee safety, reduce time loss, and provide a safe environment for residents.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Witnesses:** Representative Sommers, Prime Sponsor; Mark Brown, Washington Federation of State Employees; Kathy Burns, Citizen; Eleanor Owen, Washington Advocates for the Mentally Ill; and Bernice Buchhit, Alliance for the Mentally Ill of Washington.