

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5458

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Human Services*

Title: An act relating to regional service centers for the deaf.

Brief Description: Establishing regional service centers for the deaf.

Sponsor(s): Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators L. Smith, Jesernig, Bauer and Newhouse).

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Human Services, April 4, 1991, DPA.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
HUMAN SERVICES**

Majority Report: *Do pass as amended.* 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: Communications may present barriers to deaf and hard-of-hearing citizens seeking or receiving educational or human services in Washington.

Currently, five local deaf service centers in Washington provide advocacy services, referrals to existing programs services and act as an information clearinghouse for service providers and deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals. These centers are located in Yakima, Spokane, Vancouver, Seattle and Tacoma and receive funding from a variety of public and private sources.

Some members of the deaf and hard-of-hearing community report that deaf service centers should be provided statewide in order to assure quality human services for all deaf and hard-of-hearing citizens throughout the state.

Summary of Amended Bill: An office of deaf services is established within the Department of Social and Health Services. The department will establish a regional service center for the deaf and hard-of-hearing in each of five regions. The regional service centers will provide individual and family counseling, interpreter services, and vocational rehabilitation. Regional service centers may provide deaf and hard-of-hearing persons with lists of licensed hearing aid dispensers. The center cannot provide services offered by hearing aid dispensers licensed under Chapter 18.35 RCW. A state deaf services advisory committee and five regional deaf service advisory committees are established. A tax, in addition to the business and occupation tax, is placed on the manufacturing, wholesaling and retailing of audio tapes, audio records, and audio compact disks. The tax rate is four-tenths of one percent. The program is declared null and void unless taxes providing the funding source are in this bill or another. Also, the appropriation in the bill is eliminated if the program is funded in the 1991-93 operating budget.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: A tax on audio tapes, audio records, and audio compact discs of four-tenths of one percent is added. An appropriation of \$1,700,000 is made to the Department of Social and Health Services to fund deaf services.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Appropriation: Yes.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

Testimony For: None.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: None.