

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HJR 4216

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Local Government*

Brief Description: Amending the Constitution to permit municipalities and state agencies to employ chaplains.

Sponsor(s): Representatives Franklin, Edmondson, Haugen, Ferguson, Valle, Wood and Day.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Local Government, March 1, 1991, DPS.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

Majority Report: *That Substitute House Joint Resolution No. 4216 be substituted therefor, and the substitute resolution do pass.* Signed by 14 members: Representatives Haugen, Chair; Cooper, Vice Chair; Ferguson, Ranking Minority Member; Mitchell, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bray; Edmondson; Franklin; Horn; Nealey; Nelson; Rayburn; Roland; Wynne; and Zellinsky.

Staff: Steve Lundin (786-7127).

Background: The state constitution prohibits the use of public money or property to be used for any religious worship, exercise or instruction, or the support of any religious establishment. However, these prohibitions do not forbid the Legislature from providing for the State to employ a chaplain for state custodial, correctional, and mental institutions.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Legislature is authorized to permit counties and public hospital districts to employ chaplains at their hospitals, health facilities, and hospices.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The language was narrowed from allowing the Legislature to permit any local government and state agency to employ chaplains for a variety of purposes, to allowing counties and public hospital districts to employ chaplains for their hospitals, health facilities, and hospices.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The amendment becomes effective immediately upon certification of the election results of the November 1991 general election, if the voters approve the amendment.

Testimony For: The auditor indicates that the Constitution precludes hospital districts from employing chaplains. Chaplains can play an essential role in both the healing process and dying.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: (pro) Greg Vigdor, Washington State Hospital Association; and (pro, if amended) Jerry Sheehan, American Civil Liberties Union.