

**SENATE BILL REPORT**

**SSB 5577**

**AS PASSED SENATE, MARCH 13, 1991**

**Brief Description:** Revising the responsibilities of the board of medical examiners.

**SPONSORS:** Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators West and Niemi; by request of Department of Health).

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE**

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5577 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators West, Chairman; L. Smith, Vice Chairman; Amondson, Johnson, L. Kreidler, Niemi, and Wojahn.

**Staff:** Scott Plack (786-7409)

**Hearing Dates:** February 21, 1991; March 6, 1991

**BACKGROUND:**

The state Board of Medical Examiners is responsible for the licensing of medical doctors in the state. The board is comprised of nine members: six licensed medical doctors, one physician assistant and two consumers. Currently, the board is not authorized by statute to form panels or subcommittees to conduct business affairs of the board. The ability to form panels would permit the board to more effectively operate by allowing smaller groups to research and address board issues.

The board currently does not have the authority to grant inactive license status to physicians. The inactive license status allows a practitioner to pay a reduced fee during a period when he or she is not practicing medicine. When the practitioner wishes to reactivate the license it may be done without having to reapply for a new license.

**SUMMARY:**

The Board of Medical Examiners may appoint panels comprised of board members to conduct business delegated by the board. A majority of the panel members constitutes a quorum.

The board may adopt rules to issue inactive licenses to physicians. The holder of an inactive license may not practice medicine in the state and must pay an annual fee to the secretary. To reactivate the license the holder must comply with board rules and must not have violated any of the provisions of the Uniform Disciplinary Act. If disciplinary proceedings have been initiated against a physician on

inactive status, the license shall not be placed on active status until the proceedings have been completed.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** requested

**TESTIMONY FOR:**

The ability to form panels will allow the board to operate more efficiently. Inactive permits reduce fees to physicians who are inactive for extensive periods of time. They also allow the board to examine the ability of the physician to engage in safe practice when they reactivate their license.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST:** None

**TESTIFIED:** James Garrison, M.D., Board of Medical Examiners (pro);  
Susie Tracy, Washington State Medical Association (pro)