

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6123

As Passed Senate, February 10, 2004

Title: An act relating to modifying the public accountancy act but only with respect to: Expanding board member term limits, extending the experience look-back period for certificate holders, allowing out-of-state CPAs to qualify for a license with three years of public practice experience during the immediate past five years, expanding sanctioning authority over imposters and exam cheaters, and establishing a penalty for imposters whose license or certificate has been suspended or revoked.

Brief Description: Modifying the public accountancy act.

Sponsors: Senators Carlson, Keiser, Winsley and Spanel; by request of State Board of Accountancy.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Financial Services, Insurance & Housing: 1/20/04, 1/26/04 [DP].
Passed Senate: 2/10/04, 49-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES, INSURANCE & HOUSING

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Benton, Chair; Winsley, Vice Chair; Berkey, Keiser, Murray and Prentice.

Staff: Joanne Conrad (786-7472)

Background: Certified Public Accountants (CPAs) provide necessary services to businesses and individuals. The very nature of their work requires that they be competent and reliable. The Washington State Board of Accountancy oversees the profession, and has the ability to impose sanctions and determine qualifications for certification and licensure in Washington.

Summary of Bill: The board's authority to sanction is extended to include authority over imposters and those who cheat on the CPA exam. Criminal penalties are established for persons who illegally use the CPA designation. CPAs licensed in other jurisdictions may qualify in a shorter period of time for reciprocal licensure in Washington State. The grace period for certificate holders converting to CPA licenses is extended by two years, and the board member term limits are extended from two three-year terms to three three-year terms.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill contains several effective dates. Please refer to the bill.

Testimony For: This bill is a consensus effort to follow-up on 2001 reforms. Criminal penalties are needed for imposters. Time is needed to convert from certification to licensure.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Senator Carlson, prime sponsor; Dana McInturff, Mel Curtis, Board of Accountancy.