

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 6255

As Passed Senate, February 13, 2004

Title: An act relating to studying criminal background check processes.

Brief Description: Studying criminal background check processes.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Children & Family Services & Corrections (originally sponsored by Senators Brandland, Kline, McCaslin, Regala, Winsley, Roach, Kohl-Welles, Rasmussen and Parlette).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Children & Family Services & Corrections: 2/3/04 [DPS].
Passed Senate: 2/13/04, 47-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6255 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Stevens, Chair; Parlette, Vice Chair; Carlson, Deccio, Hargrove, McAuliffe and Regala.

Staff: Lilah Amos (786-7429)

Background: Concern exists that, because of the increasing number of criminal background checks requested for employment purposes, the existing system might not contain the necessary infrastructure to promptly provide required information. Some states have developed improved programs which are easily accessible to employers and which provide quick results. A study of the advances made by other states would provide useful information about what would be needed to improve the Washington system.

Summary of Bill: The Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, in consultation with the Washington State Patrol, must study how Washington's criminal background check system can be faster, more accessible, and more efficient. The study examines improvements in other states, the method and cost of improving the Washington system, and potential funding sources. The study must also examine whether the National Child Protection Act of 1993 can provide assistance and recommend how Washington can make criminal background checks available to employers as authorized by that act. A report must be submitted to the Legislature by December 31, 2004.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 16, 2004.

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

Testimony For: Employment is often delayed because it takes several weeks to receive the results of the criminal background checks. Other states are able to provide results within days. Washington can and should make its background check process faster and more efficient.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Senator Dale Brandland, prime sponsor; Sharon Foster, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Campfire, and YMCA's of Washington; Glenn Cramer, WSP; Tim Shellberg, WASPC.

House Amendment(s): A 15-member joint task force on criminal background check processes is created to focus on policy issues regarding criminal background check processes. The WASPC study will involve technological aspects of Washington's criminal background check system. Findings of both groups must be reported to the Legislature by December 31, 2004.