

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6591

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Government Operations & Elections, February 5, 2004

Title: An act relating to forensic pathology.

Brief Description: Eliminating the state forensic pathology fellowship program.

Sponsors: Senators Thibaudeau, Brandland, Parlette and Franklin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Elections: 2/3/04, 2/5/04 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Roach, Chair; Stevens, Vice Chair; Berkey, Horn, Kastama and McCaslin.

Staff: Mac Nicholson (786-7445)

Background: The University of Washington School of Medicine, jointly with the Washington State Forensic Investigations Council, oversee the state forensic pathology fellowship program. The program provides training for one person per year and is funded from the general fund death investigation account, which receives appropriated funds and money from fees collected by the Department of Health and local registrars for certified copies of records and other information.

The fellowship recipient is available to the county coroners without charge to perform autopsies, for consultations, and to provide testimony in court.

Summary of Bill: The fellowship program is eliminated. The Washington State Forensic Investigations Council is charged with oversight of the state forensic pathologist program and setting the state forensic pathologist's salary. The state forensic pathologist performs the duties formerly performed by the fellowship recipient. The pathologist program is funded by the death investigations account.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: The fellowship program was established in 1983 and was successful for a number of years. Recently, the program has had difficulty attracting candidates and keeping candidates. There is no increase in funding; the forensic council will use the money to contract for pathologist services. The University of Washington is okay with this legislation.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Debbie Wilke, WA Association of County Officials for the Forensic Investigations Council; Greg Sandstrom, Kitsap County Coroner.