

5522-S

Sponsor(s): Senate Committee on Commerce & Trade (originally sponsored by Senators T. Sheldon, Brandland, Carlson and Hale)

Brief Description: Privatizing the sale of liquor.

SB 5522-S - DIGEST

(DIGEST OF PROPOSED 1ST SUBSTITUTE)

Finds that the state of Washington currently contracts out part of its retail sales by allowing contract liquor stores to sell liquor. The legislature intends that further contracting out of the state's retail liquor sales will result in a system that is more efficient than public sector retailing. Therefore, the legislature intends to close a portion of the state's retail liquor stores, to contract out their operation to private individuals, and to monitor the impact of the store closures.

Creates a task force on the contracting out of liquor to advise the board as it implements further contracting out of liquor stores.

Provides that, notwithstanding any other provision of law, the board is directed to implement the closure of twenty-five state liquor stores between July 1, 2005, and December 31, 2005. When determining which liquor stores to close, the board must give due consideration to recommendations from the task force. A state liquor store may not be closed unless at least one contract liquor store exists in the area served by the liquor store, or unless the board determines that reasonable alternative access is available to persons who previously purchased products from the state liquor store that is closing.

Declares that nothing in this act shall be construed to require the closing of any contract liquor stores having contracts with the board before January 1, 2003, to sell spirits and wine for off-premises consumption, or to require these contract liquor store managers to pay a fee to continue to operate their stores.

Directs the joint legislative audit and review committee to study the impacts of further contracting out the state's retail sale of liquor, and to deliver a report on their findings to the legislature by December 31, 2007. The legislature directs that the impacts to be studied shall include, but shall not be limited to: Underage access to alcohol in state retail liquor stores and contract liquor stores; alcohol consumption rates; state revenue; traffic accidents and fatalities related to alcohol use; and crimes directly related to alcohol use.