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**SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5293**

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**State of Washington**

**59th Legislature**

**2005 Regular Session**

**By** Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections (originally sponsored by Senators Mulliken, Hargrove, Stevens and Delvin)

READ FIRST TIME 02/28/05.

1       AN ACT Relating to investigation and prevention of fraud in public  
2 assistance programs; and adding a new section to chapter 43.10 RCW.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4       NEW SECTION.   **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 43.10 RCW  
5 to read as follows:

6       (1) It is the intent of the legislature to ensure that all public  
7 assistance programs be administered to provide appropriate access and  
8 benefits to eligible recipients for as long as they need assistance and  
9 are eligible. Welfare fraud in any form undermines the purpose of  
10 public assistance and the very spirit in which it is provided.

11       (2) In an effort to ensure the integrity of all public assistance  
12 programs in the state of Washington there is established in the office  
13 of the attorney general, the office of inspector general. The office  
14 of inspector general shall be directed by the inspector general who  
15 shall be appointed by the attorney general. The office of inspector  
16 general shall investigate welfare fraud and public assistance fraud in  
17 Washington state. Welfare includes public assistance programs and  
18 benefits, temporary assistance for needy families, WorkFirst,

1 electronic benefits transfer, food stamps, and child care benefits.  
2 Medicaid fraud shall be referred to the medicaid fraud control unit of  
3 the office of the attorney general for investigation.

4 (3) It is the duty of the office of inspector general to prevent,  
5 detect, and eliminate fraud, waste, abuse, mismanagement, and  
6 misconduct in welfare and public assistance programs receiving or  
7 administering state or federal government funds. Office of inspector  
8 general duties shall include investigation of recipients, providers,  
9 contractors, and vendors of these benefits.

10 (4) The office of inspector general shall work in concert with  
11 other agencies in accomplishing its mission to prevent and detect fraud  
12 and abuse of welfare, public assistance, and state and federal funds.  
13 The office of inspector general shall coordinate services with local,  
14 state, and federal law enforcement agencies.

15 (5) Funding for the office of inspector general shall be provided  
16 by transferring funding for three full-time equivalent positions from  
17 the division of fraud investigations within the department of social  
18 and health services and transferring all funding for three full-time  
19 equivalent positions to the office of the attorney general solely for  
20 the purpose of funding the office of inspector general.

21 (6) The office of inspector general shall respond to any and all  
22 allegations of fraud or abuse of welfare and public assistance funds  
23 regardless of the source of the allegations. Allegations of fraud or  
24 abuse may be brought to the attention of the office of inspector  
25 general by agency employees, citizens of Washington state, providers,  
26 recipients, vendors, contractors, and law enforcement. Under no  
27 circumstances shall any individual or organization that brings  
28 allegations of fraud or abuse to the attention of the office of  
29 inspector general be retaliated against.

30 (7) The office of inspector general shall publish a report to the  
31 legislature annually which shall include a narrative and corresponding  
32 statistical data on its activities. This annual report may include  
33 recommendations for agency operations and policies, legislative action,  
34 government oversight, or funding. The report is due January 1, 2006,  
35 and each year thereafter.

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