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**Public Safety & Emergency  
Preparedness Committee**

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**HB 1181**

**Brief Description:** Modifying the powers and funding of the forensic investigations council.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Ericks, O'Brien, Lovick, Ormsby, McDonald, Haler and Wallace.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Authorizes the Washington State Forensic Investigations Council to spend funds from the Death Investigations Account to assist local jurisdictions in securing forensic anthropology services or other testing to determine the identity of human remains.
- Increases the fee for obtaining certified copies of vital records.

**Hearing Date:** 1/22/07

**Staff:** Yvonne Walker (786-7841).

**Background:**

Forensic Investigations Council. The Washington State Forensic Investigations Council (Council) is a 12 member committee appointed by the Governor to oversee death investigations as part of the state's criminal justice system. The Council authorizes expenditures from the Council's Death Investigations Account for the purpose of assisting local jurisdictions in the investigation of multiple deaths involving unanticipated, extraordinary, and catastrophic events, or involving multiple jurisdictions. The Council also oversees the Washington State Patrol Bureau of Forensic Laboratory Services (Bureau) and actively prepares and approves the Bureau's budget prior to submission to the Office of Financial Management.

The Bureau provides a wide range of forensic science expertise to city, county, and state law enforcement officers, assisting agencies at crime scenes, preparing evidence for trial, and providing expert testimony. The Bureau coordinates the efforts of the State's Breath Alcohol Test Program, Drug Evaluation and Classification Program, six crime laboratories, the Latent Print Laboratory, and the State Toxicology Laboratory.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

Vital Records. The Department of Health's (DOH) Center for Health Statistics (CHS) has maintained the state's system of vital records and statistics since 1907. The term "vital record" includes all birth certificates, marriage certificates, divorce certificates, fetal death certificates, and death certificates. The DOH is required by statute to charge a \$17 fee for certified copies of records and \$8 for a search of files when no copy is made. Certified copies of vital records can be obtained from the CHS or local health jurisdictions (LHJs).

A portion of each fee collected is paid to the DOH for the purpose of maintaining the state vital records system. In addition, \$5 of each current fee imposed is dedicated to the Death Investigations Account for purpose of funding of the state toxicology laboratory, county autopsy costs, and the state forensic investigations council, among other things.

**Summary of Bill:**

Forensic Investigations Council. The Washington State Forensic Investigations Council may spend a maximum of \$25,000 per biennium from the Death Investigations Account for the purpose assisting local jurisdictions in need to secure forensic anthropology services or other testing to determine the identity of human remains. The Council must adopt rules for the purpose of authorizing this expenditure.

Vital Records. The state and local fee for all certified copies of vital records is increased to \$20. Of the current fee imposed, the portion dedicated to the Death Investigations Account is increased to \$8 of each fee imposed for the issuance of a certified copy of a vital record.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.