

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1675

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Government Operations & Elections, February 26, 2008
Ways & Means, March 03, 2008

Title: An act relating to providing public notices of public health, safety, and welfare in a language other than English.

Brief Description: Providing certain public notices in a language other than English.

Sponsors: House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Santos, Curtis, McDermott, Williams, Upthegrove, Hasegawa, Roberts, Schual-Berke, Simpson and Darneille).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/07/08, 94-0.

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Elections: 2/26/08 [DP-WM, DNP].
Ways & Means: 3/03/08 [DP, DNP, w/oRec].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Fairley, Chair; Oemig, Vice Chair; Roach, Ranking Minority Member; Kline and McDermott.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Benton.

Staff: Sharon Swanson (786-7447)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Fraser, Vice Chair, Capital Budget Chair; Pridemore, Vice Chair, Operating Budget; Fairley, Hatfield, Hobbs, Keiser, Kohl-Welles, Regala, Rockefeller and Tom.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Zarelli, Ranking Minority Member; Carrell, Hewitt, Honeyford and Schoesler.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Brandland, Parlette and Roach.

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.

Staff: Richard Ramsey (786-7412)

Background: Many state and local agencies are required to provide services and materials in languages other than English to individuals with limited English proficiency.

Individuals with limited English proficiency involved in legal proceedings are provided with interpreters. The Administrative Office of the Courts is required to prepare and make available written information regarding the protection order process, sexual assault, and domestic violence.

When an individual with limited English proficiency is a party in an adjudicative proceeding, the agency is required to write all notices concerning the hearing in the primary language of the party. A notice must include information on how the party may get assistance in understanding and responding to the notice. A qualified interpreter must be provided to a party during a criminal hearing.

Summary of Bill: State agencies required to provide public notices regarding an imminent or emergent public health, safety, or welfare risk are required to provide bilingual or multilingual notices when a significant segment of residents of a community or area speak a language other than English.

The requirement applies to notices that include, but are not limited to, proposed locations for criminal facilities or facilities that would house sex offenders.

Significant segment is defined as 5 percent or more of the residents residing in the affected city, town, or county who are of limited English proficiency.

The requirement does not apply to the adoption of rules under the Administrative Procedures Act.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Substitute Bill (Government Operations & Elections): PRO: Other state statutes already require that state agencies provide notice in languages other than English. This bill is modeled after the Voting Rights Act. Emergency communications should be sent in an understandable fashion to people with limited English capabilities. The bill does not add new notice requirements. It requires that the notices be sent in a language that can be understood by the persons who need to be made aware of the situation. The bill has language that requires state agencies comply with this act but within existing resources.

Persons Testifying (Government Operations & Elections): PRO: Representative Santos, prime sponsor.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Ways & Means): None.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means): No one.