SENATE BILL REPORT
SB 5049

As of January 24, 2025

Title: An act relating to the public records exemptions accountability committee.

Brief Description: Concerning the public records exemptions accountability committee.

Sponsors: Senators Wilson, J., McCune and Fortunato.

Brief History:
Committee Activity: State Government, Tribal Affairs & Elections: 1/24/25.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Modifies the quarterly meeting requirement of the Public Records Exemptions Accountability Committee to require four meetings annually.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, TRIBAL AFFAIRS & ELECTIONS

Staff: Danielle Creech (786-7412)

Background: The Public Records Exemptions Accountability Committee (committee), commonly referred to as the Sunshine Committee, is tasked with reviewing statutory exemptions from public disclosure. Under current law, the 13-member committee must conduct an annual review of each public disclosure exemption in statute, and provide a recommendation as to whether the exemption should be continued without modification, modified, scheduled for sunset review at a later date, or terminated. The committee must meet at least once per quarter and present its recommendations to the Governor, attorney general, and appropriate committees of the Legislature.

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

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

Summary of Bill (Proposed Substitute): The requirement of the sunshine committee to meet at least once quarterly is adjusted to require at least four meetings annually.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony On Proposed Substitute: PRO: This bill comes forward due to the difficulty for legislative members to participate during the busy legislative session. This is intended to promote attendance. It is important that all members have the opportunity to participate in the work to annually review the exemptions of the public records act.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Jeff Wilson, Prime Sponsor; Rowland Thompson, Sunshine Committee; Donna Christensen, Washington Coalition for Open Government.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.