

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1136

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Human Services & Corrections, March 30, 1995

Title: An act relating to inmate welfare accounts.

Brief Description: Requiring twenty-five percent of inmate welfare accounts to be used for victims' compensation.

Sponsors: Representatives Ballasiotes, Kessler, Campbell, Costa, Padden, Delvin, Hargrove, Basich, Tokuda, Lisk, Dyer, Mastin, Schoesler, Blanton, Sheldon, Lambert, L. Thomas, Backlund, Van Luven, Benton, Buck, Crouse, Chappell, Wolfe, Huff, Mitchell, Hickel, Thompson, Foreman, Sherstad, Chandler, Clements, Patterson, Mulliken, Honeyford, Cooke, Johnson, D. Schmidt, Pennington, Hymes, Kremen, Carrell, Mielke and Sheahan.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services & Corrections: 3/22/95, 3/30/95 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Hargrove, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Fairley, Kohl, Long, Palmer, Prentice, Schow, Smith and Strannigan.

Staff: Andrea McNamara (786-7483)

Background: The institutional welfare/betterment account is an account administered by the Department of Corrections for the purpose of holding and expending funds for activities which contribute to the betterment of the offender population.

Each correctional institution's welfare/betterment fund receives its revenues solely from non-state funds such as profits from the inmate store, inmate telephone commissions and vending machine concessions, donations, recycling of aluminum cans, and confiscated contraband money.

Current department policy authorizes the superintendent to approve expenditures from an institution's welfare/betterment fund for a variety of activities, including such things as recreation equipment and supplies, television cable fees, the extended family visit program, visiting areas, hobby crafts, holiday events, offender newsletters and library supplies, religious supplies and equipment, and donations to nonprofit organizations.

Offenders are currently required to contribute to the crime victims' compensation program through one or more of the following avenues: (1) court-ordered legal financial obligations; (2) mandatory deductions of 5 percent from correctional industries earnings; and (3) all money received by an offender for testifying in a judicial proceeding.

The crime victims' compensation program receives the majority of its funds through the public safety and education account.

Summary of Amended Bill: The Department of Corrections is directed to transfer 25 percent of the total annual revenues and receipts in each institutional betterment fund to the Department of Labor and Industries for the purpose of providing direct benefits to crime victims through the crime victims compensation program.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: Changes are made to clarify the Legislature's intent that the 25 percent of the account balances is prior to any other expenditures from the funds and that the transfer is to be a net increase in funding to the crime victims compensation program rather than a supplanting of current funding sources.

The main piece of the bill is moved from Chapter 43.88 RCW to Chapter 72.09 RCW.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: The crime victims compensation has had continual problems with achieving stability in funding and often falls short of money necessary to provide statutorily-mandated benefits. Approximately half of the claims received are by sexual assault victims, and half of those victims are children. Any additional money would be beneficial.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Ballasiotes, prime sponsor; Debbie Terwilliger, Labor & Industries (pro); Tom Rolfs, Director, Division of Prisons.