

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5026

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Government Operations, January 10, 1996

Title: An act relating to separating the duties of coroner and prosecuting attorney.

Brief Description: Separating the duties of coroner and prosecuting attorney.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Government Operations (originally sponsored by Senator Smith).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations: 1/17/95, 2/9/95 [DPS]; 1/10/96 [DP].
Passed Senate, 3/7/95, 49-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Sheldon, Vice Chair; Goings, Hale, Heavey, McCaslin and Winsley.

Staff: Eugene Green (786-7405)

Background: Except as provided by home rule charter, all counties with a population of more than 40,000 have an elected prosecuting attorney and an elected coroner. In counties with a population of less than 40,000, no coroner is elected and the prosecuting attorney is the ex officio coroner.

Summary of Bill: In each county with a population of 20,000 or more and less than 40,000, the county legislative authority may appoint a coroner. If a county goes above 40,000, an appointed coroner continues until a coroner is elected at the next general election. This new population limit affects the following counties: Okanogan; Stevens; Kittitas; Douglas; Jefferson; and Pacific.

An appointed coroner serves at the pleasure of the county legislative authority and may serve two or more counties under an arrangement by interlocal agreement.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Prosecutors in small counties do not have the funds or time to do an adequate job as ex-officio coroner.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Judy Arnold, Thurston County Coroner; K.O. Rosenberg, NE Tri-Counties.