

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6110

Passed Senate, February 5, 1996

Title: An act relating to death investigations.

Brief Description: Providing moneys for the death investigations account.

Sponsors: Senators Haugen, Loveland, Owen, Smith, Thibaudeau and Bauer.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Ways & Means: 1/23/96, 1/24/96 [DP].
Passed Senate, 2/5/96, 42-6.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Rinehart, Chair; Loveland, Vice Chair; Bauer, Drew, Fraser, Hargrove, Hochstatter, Long, Moyer, Sheldon, Spanel, Strannigan, West and Winsley.

Staff: Steve Jones (786-7440)

Background: The Washington State Toxicology Laboratory performs the toxicologic procedures and tests requested by coroners, medical examiners and prosecuting attorneys, as well as DUI testing. It operates under the authority of the Forensic Investigations Council. Funding comes from three sources of fees which are deposited into the death investigation fund 02K: class H liquor license fees in the amount of \$300,000 per biennium; a \$3 portion of the \$11 fee on vital records collected by the Department of Health; and 50 percent of a \$125 DUI fee assessed against persons convicted of driving under the influence, with the remaining 50 percent going to the State Patrol. The DUI fee proportion will change to 15 percent for the Toxicology Lab and 85 percent for the State Patrol at the end of the current biennium.

Summary of Bill: The fee for certified copies of birth and death certificates and other vital records is raised from \$11 to \$13, with the portion for the death investigations account being raised from \$3 to \$5.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 8, 1996.

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

Testimony For: The state has established a quality system for forensic investigations. A stable source of funding is essential to maintain this system. The death investigations account supports training for county coroners and drug and poison testing. A significant

increase in drug-related deaths has placed more demands on the state toxicology lab, and recent legislation has resulted in more laboratory testing for drug-impaired drivers.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Dr. Barry Logan, state toxicologist; Judy Arnold, Thurston Co. coroner; Debbie Wilke, WA Association of County Officials.