

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5408

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Ways & Means, January 31, 2000

**Title:** An act relating to a state medal of valor.

**Brief Description:** Creating a state medal of valor.

**Sponsors:** Senators Benton, Hale, Shin, Winsley, Patterson and Rossi.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** State & Local Government: 2/10/99, 2/15/99 [DP].  
Ways & Means: 3/8/99 [DPS]; 1/31/00 [DPS].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5408 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Loveland, Chair; Brown, Vice Chair; Fraser, Honeyford, Kline, Kohl-Welles, Long, McDonald, Rasmussen, Roach, Rossi, B. Sheldon, Snyder, Spanel, Thibaudeau, Winsley and Wojahn.

**Staff:** Karen Barrett (786-7711)

**Background:** In 1986, the state of Washington established a decoration of the state Medal of Merit with accompanying ribbons and appurtenances for award by the Governor, in the name of the state, to any person who has been distinguished by exceptionally meritorious conduct in performing outstanding services to the people and state of Washington, upon the nomination of the Governor's State Medal of Merit Committee.

No similar state decoration exists to reward one who has saved, or attempted to save, the life of another at the risk of serious injury or death to himself or herself.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** The decoration of the state Medal of Valor is established. The medal may be awarded by the Governor, in the name of the state, to any person who saved, or attempted to save, the life of another at the risk of serious injury or death to himself or herself, upon the selection of the Governor's State Medal of Valor Committee.

A State Medal of Valor Committee is created for selecting honorees for the award of the state Medal of Merit. The committee membership consists of the Governor, President of the Senate, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, or their designees. The Secretary of State serves as a nonvoting ex-officio member and serves as the secretary to the committee. Any individual may nominate any resident of this state for any act of valor.

The award is presented to the recipient only during a joint session of both houses of the Legislature. The state Medal of Valor may be awarded posthumously. The medal cannot be awarded to those acting as a result of service given by any branch of law enforcement, fire fighting, rescue, or other hazardous profession where the individual is employed by a government entity within the state of Washington.

The decoration of the state Medal of Merit and the certificate accompanying the medal are specified.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** The substitute bill does not include any relief from the cost of an undergraduate education for medal recipients and their children.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Testimony For:** This is a bill where the people of this great state can actually make a difference in the lives of those who have risked their own to save another. This is the least we can do for these who are prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice to save another.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Senator Benton, prime sponsor (pro).