

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1479

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to the administration of the uniform unclaimed property act.

Brief Description: Modifying the uniform unclaimed property act.

Sponsors: Representatives G. Fisher, Foreman, Wang and Anderson; by request of Department of Revenue.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Revenue, February 24, 1993, DP;
Passed House, March 8, 1993, 97-0;
Amended by Senate;
House Concurred;
Passed Legislature, April 22, 1993, 96-0.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON REVENUE

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 13 members:
Representatives G. Fisher, Chair; Foreman, Ranking Minority Member; Fuhrman, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Cothorn; Leonard; Morris; Romero; Rust; Silver; Talcott; Thibaudeau; Van Luven; and Wang.

Staff: Bob Longman (786-7139).

Background: The Uniform Unclaimed Property Act generally requires that unclaimed property must be turned over to the custody of the state Department of Revenue. If the property is unclaimed after three years, it is sold to the highest bidder at public sale. The proceeds from the sale of abandoned property are deposited into the state general fund. Unclaimed property holders report property on either November 1 or May 1, and remit the property, if unclaimed, to the department six months later. The department is required to publish names of claimants within four months of receiving these names. The amount of unclaimed property the department receives has risen substantially in the last few years.

Current law does not specifically address unclaimed property held by the federal government and its agencies.

The department is required to review and accept or reject items abandoned in mini-storage warehouses. Mini-storage warehouse owners are authorized to hold sales of the goods to recover rental and penalty costs. Generally, nothing of value is left after the sale.

Unclaimed lottery prizes are retained in the state lottery account for further use as prizes.

Summary of Bill: The four report and remit dates for unclaimed property are replaced by one combined date of November 1 of each year. The time period for advertising unclaimed property by the department is increased from four to 10 months, which will allow for advertising region by region and even out the workload to provide more efficient service to claimants. The federal government and its agencies are included in the scope of the unclaimed property law. Mini-storage warehouses are no longer part of the department's unclaimed property program.

Unclaimed lottery prizes are added to the list of unclaimed property to be turned over to the Department of Revenue. These unclaimed prizes will then be deposited in the general fund.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: The bill allows for more efficient reporting of unclaimed property to the Department of Revenue. Mini-storage warehouse sites remit unclaimed property to the state only after recovering unpaid rent by auctioning the contents. The remaining items are not valuable and not suitable for remitting to the state.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: (Both in favor): Ryan Spiller, Department of Revenue; and Doug Bohlke, Self-Storage Association.