

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1739

As Reported By House Committee On:
State Government

Title: An act relating to the citizen suggestion program.

Brief Description: Creating the citizen suggestion program.

Sponsors: House Committee on State Government (originally sponsored by Representatives Finkbeiner, Dyer, Heavey, Quall, Cothorn, Johanson, Springer, Brumsickle, Schoesler, Dunshee, H. Myers, Sheldon, Romero, Pruitt, G. Fisher, Orr, Roland, Lemmon and Anderson).

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
State Government, February 1, 1994, DP2S.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: The second substitute bill be substituted therefor and the second substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Anderson, Chair; Veloria, Vice Chair; Reams, Ranking Minority Member; L. Thomas, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Campbell; Conway; Dyer; King and Pruitt.

Staff: Kenneth Hirst (786-7105).

Background: The state's Productivity Board is charged with providing an employee suggestion program to encourage and reward suggestions by state employees that promote efficiency and economy in state government.

A cash award for such a suggestion is to be 10 percent of the net savings, but not more than \$10,000. The board sets guidelines for making cash awards for suggestions for which benefits to the state are intangible or for which benefits cannot be calculated. Funds for the awards are to be drawn from the appropriation of the agency benefiting from the suggestion. An award may not be made to an elected state official or a state agency director. An award is not normally to be made to an employee for a suggestion which is within the scope of the employee's regularly assigned responsibilities. A cash award may not be made to a confidential secretary or administrative assistant in the immediate office of an elected state official.

Summary of Second Substitute Bill: Beginning January 1, 1995, the Productivity Board must administer a citizen suggestion program. A cash award of up to \$600 is to be made for such a suggestion. The same criteria which apply under current law for state employee suggestions are to be used. No award may be made under the employee or citizen suggestion program to a person who owns, is employed by, or is acting as an agent for a business that will receive a financial benefit if the citizen's suggestion were implemented.

If the board decides not to grant an award for a citizen's suggestion or if it decides to grant an award that the citizen believes to be inadequate, the citizen or the citizen's representative may request that the board reconsider its decision. The request must be filed with the board within 30 days of its decision. After such a reconsideration, a determination of the board is final.

Second Substitute Bill Compared to Engrossed Substitute Bill: The second substitute bill reduces the maximum value of the cash awards from \$10,000 to \$600 and postpones the effective date of the bill one year to January 1, 1995. It also eliminates provisions of the engrossed substitute bill that: permitted awards to be made for suggestions that generate new monies for the state; and provided a "null and void" clause for lack of an appropriation.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: The bill gives citizens a direct avenue for making suggestions to the state for saving money. It should supplement on employee suggestion program that has saved over \$15 million.

Testimony Against: Response times and dissatisfaction will increase if money is not appropriated for evaluating citizens' suggestions.

Witnesses: Representative Finkbeiner, Prime Sponsor (in favor); Ralph Munro, Secretary of State (in favor); Barbara Peck, Office of the Secretary of State (in favor); and Paul Klinkose, Department of Transportation (requesting an appropriation for evaluations).