

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1739

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS, APRIL 5, 1993

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)

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chairman; Drew, Vice Chairman; Loveland, Oke, Owen, and Winsley.

Staff: Barbara Howard (786-7410)

Hearing Dates: March 31, 1993; April 2, 1993

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Rinehart, Chairman; Spanel, Vice Chairman; Bauer, Bluechel, Cantu, Gaspard, Hargrove, Hochstatter, Jesernig, McDonald, Moyer, Owen, Pelz, Quigley, L. Smith, Snyder, Talmadge, Williams, and Wojahn.

Staff: Steve Jones (786-7440)

Hearing Dates: April 5, 1993

BACKGROUND:

The state Productivity Board administers 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 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. It 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.

Awards are not authorized for suggestions from private citizens.

SUMMARY:

Beginning January 1, 1994, the Productivity Board must administer a citizen suggestion program. Cash awards for these suggestions must be based on using the same criteria which apply for state employee suggestions. No award may be made 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 the board to 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.

Unless funding is provided specifically in the Omnibus Appropriations Act, this program is null and void.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AMENDMENT:

A dedicated account is created in the State Treasury to offset the cost of administering the Citizen Suggestion Program. Up to 20 percent of the savings and new revenue is committed to the account to be used only for administrative expenses.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED WAYS & MEANS AMENDMENT:

Technical changes are made to the dedicated account.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: available

TESTIMONY FOR:

Private citizens are likely to have as good suggestions for improving state government as state employees do, and they should have an opportunity to benefit if their recommendations are adopted. We plan to be very cautious in implementing the program, because it has been unsuccessful or very expensive in other states that have tried it. Since there is a null and void clause, there should be a self-funding mechanism.

TESTIMONY AGAINST:

We are concerned about the program being adopted without an appropriation. It is a very labor-intensive activity. We feel it is useful for the state, but the cost of implementing it cannot be accomplished with existing staff, especially if current budget cuts are adopted.

TESTIFIED: Representative Finkbeiner, prime sponsor (with amendment); Ralph Munro, Secretary of State (pro); Linda Mackintosh, Productivity Board (pro); Paul Klinkosz, Manager of Operations, DOT (con)