

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 2160

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES,
FEBRUARY 25, 1994

Brief Description: Concerning employees of public housing authorities.

SPONSORS: Representatives Ogden, Wineberry and H. Myers

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRADE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & HOUSING

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Talmadge, Chairman; Wojahn, Vice Chairman; Deccio, Erwin, Franklin, Fraser, Hargrove, McAuliffe, McDonald, Moyer, Niemi, Prentice, Quigley and Winsley.

Staff: Richard Rodger (786-7461)

Hearing Dates: February 24, 1994; February 25, 1994

BACKGROUND:

Under current law, the Washington State Patrol is authorized to disclose, at the request of a school district, business organization, or state agency which educates, treats, supervises or provides recreation to children or developmentally disabled persons: (1) an applicant's record of convictions of certain offenses against persons; (2) civil findings of child abuse or exploitation in dependency or dissolution proceedings when the perpetrator contested the allegation of abuse; and (3) disciplinary board final decisions. An applicant is defined as any prospective employee or volunteer who has unsupervised access to children, developmentally disabled persons or non-certified educational personnel.

Local public housing authorities, through various federal, state, and local programs, provide safe and sanitary housing for many lower-income persons and populations with special needs. These populations consist of a large number of developmentally disabled persons, elderly persons, and children who are considered vulnerable to abuse or exploitation.

The current definition of "business or organization" does not include public housing authorities as a governmental entity authorized to request background information on prospective employees or volunteers. Many states will not provide background information to public housing authorities unless

they are specifically authorized, in state law, to request such information.

SUMMARY:

The definition of "business or organization" is amended to expressly include public housing authorities as entities that can request background checks on prospective employees or volunteers who will or may have unsupervised access to children under the age of 16, developmentally disabled persons or vulnerable adults.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: none requested

TESTIMONY FOR:

This is a prevention bill. Public housing authorities provide housing for all groups, including children and vulnerable adults. There should be a background check on employees or volunteers who have contact with these groups. While there has been no recorded incident, this bill will provide an additional preventive measure for public housing authorities.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: Representative Val Ogden, prime sponsor (pro); Mike Ryherd, WA Assn. of Housing Authorities (pro)