

SENATE BILL REPORT

EHB 2376

AS PASSED SENATE, FEBRUARY 26, 1994

**Brief Description:** Revising the powers and duties of the sentencing guidelines commission.

**SPONSORS:** Representatives Morris and Jones; by request of Sentencing Guidelines Commission

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONS**

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS**

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE**

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators A. Smith, Chairman; Hargrove, Nelson, Quigley, Roach, Schow and Spanel.

**Staff:** Susan Mahoney (786-7717)

**Hearing Dates:** February 18, 1994

**BACKGROUND:**

The Sentencing Guidelines Commission is assigned the task of recommending sentencing standards for felony offenses. The commission is responsible for continuing to recommend modifications to these standards and to the existing criminal code. The commission also serves as an important informational resource for the Governor, legislators, legislative staff, criminal justice agencies, and the public.

Due to ever increasing caseloads, the demand for information has grown. Under current funding and provisions the commission is not able to adequately compile and maintain necessary sentencing practices information. The Sentencing Guidelines Commission is requesting legislation that will expand its authority and ability to collect information regarding state and local sentencing practices.

**SUMMARY:**

The Sentencing Guidelines Commission may serve as an information center for the collection, preparation, analysis, and dissemination of information on state and local sentencing practices. The commission may develop and maintain a computerized sentencing information system. The commission may also conduct ongoing research regarding sentencing guidelines, use of and alternatives to total confinement, plea bargaining, and other matters relating to the improvement of the criminal justice system.

The commission may provide staffing and services to the juvenile disposition standards commission, if authorized by RCW 13.40.025 and 13.40.027. The commission may also conduct joint meetings with the juvenile disposition standards committee.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** available

**TESTIMONY FOR:**

Although the Sentencing Guidelines Commission already performs these functions, they have no specific authority to do so. It is hoped the commission will be able to obtain necessary funding if specific authority is granted by statute.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST:** None

**TESTIFIED:** Dave Fallen, Sentencing Guidelines Commission (pro)