

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2429

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS,  
FEBRUARY 25, 1994

**Brief Description:** Concerning funeral expenses for indigent persons.

**SPONSORS:** House Committee on Human Services (originally sponsored by Representatives Karahalios, Johanson and Wineberry)

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES**

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS**

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

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

**Staff:** Rod McAulay (786-7754)

**Hearing Dates:** February 25, 1994

**BACKGROUND:**

Prior to the 1993-95 state biennial budget, the state assumed responsibility for the preparation, care and disposition of the remains of a decedent whose assets, including those of a surviving spouse, parents and children, were insufficient to pay for a minimum funeral and interment.

The current budget eliminated this program, though the legal authority was not repealed. The maximum assistance available was \$1,127, which included \$691 for preparation and funeral services, and \$436 for burial and purchase of plot. According to the budget notes, the elimination of funding of the funeral assistance program would bring a biennial savings to the income assistance budget of \$6.4 million, and to the Community Services Administration budget of \$580,000.

**SUMMARY:**

The Department of Social and Health Services is to review and make recommendations by December 31, 1994 to determine the feasibility of assuming responsibility for the payment of funeral expenses for indigent persons. In the review, the department is to consult specified organizations of interest such as the funeral professions.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** available

**TESTIMONY FOR:**

Counties are taking care of unclaimed deceased persons. This bill will address claimed but indigent deceased persons. Will get all players back at the table.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST:** None

**TESTIFIED:** Representative Karahalios, original prime sponsor (pro); Debbie Wilke, WACO (pro)