

SENATE BILL REPORT

E2SSB 6426

AS PASSED SENATE, FEBRUARY 15, 1994

Brief Description: Providing public electronic access to government information.

SPONSORS: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Sutherland, Ludwig, Talmadge, Quigley, Vognild, Williams, Owen, McCaslin, Amondson, Hochstatter, West, Erwin, Bauer, Pelz, A. Smith, Hargrove, Skratek and Oke)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6426 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

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

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Haugen, Chairman.

Staff: Diane Smith (786-7410)

Hearing Dates: February 3, 1994; February 4, 1994

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 6426 be substituted therefor, and the second substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Rinehart, Chairman; Quigley, Vice Chairman; Bauer, Bluechel, Cantu, Gaspard, Hargrove, Hochstatter, Ludwig, McDonald, Moyer, Niemi, Pelz, Roach, Snyder, Spanel, Sutherland, Talmadge, West, Williams and Wojahn.

Staff: Steve Jones (786-7440)

Hearing Dates: February 7, 1994; February 8, 1994

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

BACKGROUND:

The fact that computers and computer-related technology now exist and have broad public acceptance is reflected in an awareness of efficiencies and increased citizen participation in government that may be achieved by giving citizens electronic access to publicly available government documents.

SUMMARY:

The Public Disclosure Commission shall design a program for public electronic access to public legislative documents by January 1, 1995.

The public information access policy task force is created. It is composed of representatives from various state agencies, commissions and local governments.

The task force shall design a policy by September 30, 1994. The policy shall ensure that the information available from the state and state agencies will be managed, protected and used effectively and responsibly for the public good.

The task force shall also propose a program by September 30, 1994 for public electronic access to government information and the computer technology which can be used for this purpose.

The task force shall cease to exist on June 30, 1995 unless reauthorized by the Legislature.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: available

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

TESTIMONY FOR:

Opening publicly available state documents to computer access for everyone will increase citizen involvement and participation in state policy decisionmaking. The added incremental cost is small in comparison to the increased access gained.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: David Clark, Melissa Warheit, Public Disclosure Commission (pro); Nancy Zussy, WA State Library (pro); Bruce Ziegman, WA Library Association (pro); Jerry Sheehan, ACLU (pro); Ken Kanikeberg, OSPI (pro); Sam Hunt, Department of Information Services (pro)

HOUSE AMENDMENT(S):

Members of the public information access policy task force also include representatives of the general public, the state House and Senate and optionally, the state judicial branch.

The task force is to identify specific means of encouraging and establishing widespread, public, electronic access to the public records held by state and local government. Its study does not include providing the type of services beyond such

access that would be provided by a vendor for commercial purposes, such as through a geographic information system.

The task force must report to the Legislature and the Governor its initial recommendations by December 1, 1994, and its final recommendations by December 1, 1995. The task force shall cease to exist on June 30, 1996.