

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6426

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS, FEBRUARY 8, 1994

Brief Description: Providing public electronic access to government information.

SPONSORS: 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

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 Legislature shall design and implement a program for public electronic access to public legislative documents by January 1, 1995. The Public Electronic Access Advisory

Committee is created to guide and advise the Legislature in this effort.

The Department of Information Services shall recommend to the Legislature by January 1, 1996 a program for public electronic access to publicly available documents produced by state agencies. A report shall be made to the Energy and Utilities Committees of the House and Senate by January 1, 1995. The Department of Information Services shall also study and recommend a similar program for documents produced by all political subdivisions of the state. This report is to be made to the Energy and Utilities Committees by January 1, 1996. The chief executive officer of each department of state government is directed to cooperate with the Department of Information Services in its efforts regarding state agency documents. Likewise, the State Library Commission shall report to the Legislature by January 1, 1995 on its recommendations for a program of public electronic access to documents produced by state agencies via public access terminals at public libraries.

By January 1, 1995, the Public Disclosure Commission shall design and implement a program for public documents filed with it.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall report its recommendations to the Legislature by January 1, 1995, for a program to access local school districts. A program shall be implemented by January 1, 1996.

EFFECT OF PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE:

The functions of the legislative advisory committee are given to the already existing joint Legislative Systems Committee. The key role of the Department of Information Systems is subsumed by the public information access policy task force. The task force is composed of representatives from various state agencies and commissions.

Programs for access shall be designed by January 1, 1995 by the Public Disclosure Commission and the Legislature. The task force shall design a policy by September 30, 1994. The policy shall state 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.

EFFECT OF PROPOSED SECOND SUBSTITUTE:

Local government is included in the membership of the task force, which is directed to examine electronic access to state voters' pamphlets.

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)