

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1141

As Reported By House Committee On:

Government Administration

Title: An act relating to the elimination and consolidation of boards and commissions.

Brief Description: Eliminating boards and commissions.

Sponsors: Representatives Scott, Dunshee and Poulsen; by request of Governor Lowry.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Government Administration: 2/7/97, 2/11/97 [DPS].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives D. Schmidt, Chairman; D. Sommers, Vice Chairman; Scott, Ranking Minority Member; Doumit; Dunn; Dunshee; Murray; Reams; Smith; L. Thomas; Wensman and Wolfe.

Staff: Bronwyn Mauldin (786-7093).

Background: The Governor and the Office of Financial Management (OFM) are required to review state boards and commissions, and in every odd-numbered year submit to the Legislature a recommended list of boards and commissions to be terminated or consolidated. In 1993-95, Washington had 478 boards and commissions, down from a high of 569 in 1991-93. Each board or commission operates in conjunction with and reports to a particular state agency or the governor's office.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Twelve boards and commissions are abolished. These are the Health Care Assistants Advisory Committee, Washington State Council on Vocational Education, Criminal Justice Services Advisory Council, Lower Columbia Bi-State Water Quality Steering Committee, and Public Information Access Policy Task Force. In addition, the Community Diversification Program Advisory Committee to the Department of Community Trade and Economic Development is abolished. Six regional committees advising the Secretary of Corrections on locations for new work release programs are also abolished.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The original bill also abolished the Washington State Collection Agency Board, and the Local Government Advisory Committee in the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development, and also merged the State Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers with the Cemetery Board to create the Funeral and Cemetery Board.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 3, 1997.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on July 1, 1997.

Testimony For: Eliminating these boards and commissions will result in an estimated savings of \$300,000. Most of the boards and commissions to be abolished are no longer required by law, have completed their work, or do not meet often.

Merging the Funeral Directors and Embalmers Board with the Cemetery Board will make regulation and oversight by the Department of Licensing more efficient, and saves money for the government. Merging them reflects the current trend of consolidating the two types of businesses in the death industry. It also gives consumers a single place to turn to when they have problems.

Testimony Against: The Funeral Directors and Embalmers Board should not be merged with the Cemetery Board because one licenses professionals while the other licenses companies. Both boards are self-supporting, and abolishing them will only save the state about \$9,000 per year.

The Collection Agency Board should not be abolished because the industry needs a knowledgeable disciplinary board. The board is self-supporting through license fees.

The Local Government Advisory Committee should not be abolished because it sends the wrong signal to the new director of the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development.

Testified: (Pro) Fred Hellberg, Office of the Governor; Jon Donnellan, Department of Licensing; Frank Wilson, State Cemetery Board; Edward Wahl, State Funeral Directors and Embalmer's Board; Mike Courtney, AARP; and Bruce Reeves, Senior Citizen Lobby.

(Con) David Daly, Washington Interment Association; Dave Sharp, Washington State Funeral Directors Association; and Mark Gjurasic and Judy Waddick, Washington Collectors Association.

(With Concerns) Jim Justin, Association of Washington Cities.