

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5410

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Human Services & Corrections, February 6, 1997

Title: An act relating to the indeterminate sentence review board.

Brief Description: Extending the existence of the indeterminate sentence review board.

Sponsors: Senator Long; by request of Governor Lowry.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services & Corrections: 2/4/97, 2/6/97 [DP-WM].
Ways & Means: 2/19/97.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.
Signed by Senators Long, Chair; Franklin, Hargrove, Kohl, Schow and Stevens.

Staff: Andrea McNamara (786-7483)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Staff: Bryon Moore (786-7726)

Background: The Indeterminate Sentence Review Board (ISRB) is scheduled, under current law, to sunset on June 30, 1998.

The ISRB consists of a three-member citizen board acting as a quasi-judicial body over the population of offenders who committed their crimes before the Sentencing Reform Act (SRA) was enacted in 1984. The board's functions relate to parole, and include deciding when a pre-SRA offender is fit for release, managing the offender's parole status by setting appropriate parole conditions and imposing sanctions for parole violations.

ISRB members are prohibited under current law from engaging in any other business or profession or from holding any public office.

Governor Lowry was required, under the terms of the existing law, to recommend to the 1997 Legislature alternatives for carrying out the duties of the board. The Office of Financial Management convened a workgroup of stakeholders over the 1996 interim to study possible alternatives.

The work group concluded, with the exception of the participating defense attorneys, that retaining the board remains the best option to satisfy public safety concerns and legal constraints.

Summary of Bill: The Indeterminate Sentence Review Board sunset date is extended from June 30, 1998, to June 30, 2008.

Recommendations regarding alternatives for carrying out the duties of the board must be presented by the Governor to the Legislature in 2007.

ISRB members are authorized to engage in other business or professions or hold public office only after the prior approval of the Executive Ethics Board.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: Extension of the Indeterminate Sentence Review Board (ISRB) is necessary to manage the remaining population of offenders under its jurisdiction. Alternatives to continuing the board were explored and rejected for a number of reasons, primarily because of serious legal problems and financial constraints. Crime victims and their advocates are supportive of the ISRB's process that allows and encourages victim input when offenders come up for review, and they have concerns that any alternative to the board might reduce the role of victims in release decisions.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Kit Bail, Chair, Indeterminate Sentence Review Board, (pro); Steve Ekstrom, Office of Crime Victims Advocacy, Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development, (pro).