

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5834

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Commerce & Labor, March 5, 1997

Title: An act relating to providing entrepreneurial opportunities for disabled persons.

Brief Description: Providing entrepreneurial opportunities for disabled persons.

Sponsors: Senators Fairley, Winsley, Kohl and McAuliffe.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Commerce & Labor: 2/24/97, 3/5/97 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5834 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Schow, Chair; Horn, Vice Chair; Anderson, Franklin, Fraser and Heavey.

Staff: Aurora Almeda (786-7488)

Background: The minority and women's businesses chapter was established to mitigate societal discrimination and other factors related to such businesses' participation in public works projects. The Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises (OMWBE) studies, develops and implements plans to provide minority and women-owned businesses with increased opportunities to participate in public works projects.

OMWBE is also responsible for statewide certification of minority and women-owned businesses. Certification by OMWBE allows such firms to participate in equal opportunity and affirmative action programs which are administered by the state and other public entities.

There is concern that businesses owned by disabled persons are under-represented and have been denied equitable competitive opportunities in contracting.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises must conduct a study to evaluate the problems encountered by disabled business owners, and recommend solutions on how to serve such businesses under the agency's program. Disabled owned businesses must be included in the Office Minority and Women's Business Enterprises overall program by July 1, 1998.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises must conduct a one-year study to identify the problems encountered by businesses owned by disabled persons in seeking and obtaining public contract opportunities. The study must prescribe resolutions and recommend how the office will serve businesses owned by

disabled persons. Businesses owned by disabled persons will be incorporated into the programs of the Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises on July 1, 1998.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 21, 1997.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed, except sections 1 through 13, which take effect July 1, 1998.

Testimony For: Many businesses owned by disabled persons have emerged due to lack of employment opportunities. Disabled persons who begin their own businesses are often overlooked for contracts because they may be perceived as noncompetitive. Some disabled business owners may be unable to meet the normal turn-around time for prospective clients, but certain tasks can be subcontracted out to allow the disabled business owner's capacity to finish a given project. Other states, such as Michigan and Maryland, have established successful disability enterprises programs. Similar to the services provided for minority and women's businesses, the Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises program can help disabled business owners compete for public contracts,.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Greg Morris, WA Alliance for Attorneys and Business Owners with Disabilities; Richard Ragan, WA Alliance for Business Owners with Disabilities; Glen Strachan; Glenn Galbreth, Paralyzed Veterans of America; Toby Olson, Governor's Committee on Disability Issues.