

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5836

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Education, March 4, 1997

**Title:** An act relating to record checks of educational employees.

**Brief Description:** Requiring record checks for employees of approved private schools who have regularly scheduled unsupervised access to children.

**Sponsors:** Senators Johnson, Hochstatter, Zarelli, Winsley, Oke and Kohl.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Education: 3/4/97 [DPS].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5836 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Hochstatter, Chair; Finkbeiner, Vice Chair; Johnson and Rasmussen.

**Staff:** Susan Mielke (786-7422)

**Background:** Generally, classroom teachers in private schools must hold appropriate Washington State certification.

Since 1992, all applicants seeking initial school employee certification, whether for private or public school employment, must undergo a fingerprint-record check to discover any in-state or out-of-state criminal convictions.

The applicant is responsible for the \$53 record check fee. In addition, there is a charge for obtaining the applicant's fingerprints, which ranges between \$5 and \$20.

Since 1992, prior to hiring a public school employee who will have regularly scheduled unsupervised access to children, the individual must undergo a fingerprint-record check. In 1996, the state provided funding and directed all public school employees who have regularly scheduled unsupervised access to children who have not had a fingerprint-record check to begin the process for such a record check by June 30, 1997.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** All private school employees hired prior to July 1, 1997, who have regularly scheduled unsupervised access to children and who have not had a fingerprint-record check must begin the process for a fingerprint-record check by June 30, 1998. The Superintendent of Public Instruction must provide a copy of the record report to the employee.

All private school employees hired after June 30, 1997, who will have regularly scheduled unsupervised access to children, must undergo a fingerprint record check.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** A requirement is added that applicants for private school employment must undergo a fingerprint record check if the applicant will have regularly scheduled access to children. The applicant or the private school shall pay for the check. The Superintendent of Public Instruction, not the private school, will give the record report to the employee.

**Appropriation:** \$500,000.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on February 24, 1997.

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

**Testimony For:** This is a public safety issue, and not a public vs. private school issue. Regardless of where the children attend school, we need to take steps to keep them safe. State law gives the Legislature purview over safety and health matters involving private schools.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Senator Johnson, prime sponsor (pro); Stephen Dinger, WFIS (pro); Dwayne Slate, WSSDA (pro).