

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5951

As of February 4, 1998

Title: An act relating to the Washington state organ donor medal.

Brief Description: Establishing the Washington state organ donor medal.

Sponsors: Senators B. Sheldon, Prentice, McAuliffe, Fairley, Goings, Franklin, Jacobsen, Snyder, Rasmussen, Fraser, Kohl, Oke, Heavey, Bauer, Patterson, Kline, Wood, Winsley and Prince.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations: 1/16/98.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Staff: Diane Smith (786-7410)

Background: Medical technology enables persons who receive donated human organs to see, to live longer, and to improve their quality of life. Yet many who are in desperate need of donated organs suffer and die on waiting lists due to a shortage of willing donors.

It is thought that increased public awareness of donors and their gift of life and sight will encourage others to donate. It is also believed that those who donate deserve to be remembered in a special way.

Summary of Bill: A Washington State Organ Donor Medal is established, consisting of an inscribed bronze medal awarded by the Governor at the request of the donor's family and friends.

The organ donor is defined as an individual who makes a donation of all or part of a human body to take effect upon or after death.

An application procedure for the Washington State organ donor medal is specified. Family members of the organ donor may apply or a federally certified organ procurement organization may apply on behalf of the family member or person who consented to the organ donation as allowed in the statutes regarding human remains.

The application is made to the Governor's office. Eligibility is determined and the medal presented by the organ procurement organization.

Each eligible family of an organ donor is entitled to receive one organ donor medal unless more than one member of the family is an organ donor. In that case, an eligible family is entitled to receive one medal for each family member who was an organ donor. Duplicate medals may be purchased by eligible family members. Anyone else wishing to purchase a medal may request the permission of the eligible family to do so.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: The medal program acknowledges the heroism of organ donors, equivalent to the heroism of recues made in other arenas. The public acknowledgement helps to encourage others to donate organs which are in short supply. Approximately ten people a day die in the United States due to lack of donors. Transplantation surgery is a major profit center for Washington's hospitals.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Senator Sheldon, prime sponsor; Henry W. Sykes; Irwin W. Etter, Dannie Cubit, TRIO; Joyce Grawet, Manny English, Lions Eye Bank.