

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 6667

As Passed Senate, February 14, 1998

Title: An act relating to the Washington gift of life medal.

Brief Description: Establishing the Washington gift of life medal.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Government Operations (originally sponsored by Senators B. Sheldon, Winsley, Snyder, T. Sheldon, Fairley, McAuliffe, Brown, Kohl, Rasmussen, Prentice, Patterson, Haugen, Loveland, Hargrove, Kline, Franklin, Wojahn, Jacobsen and Bauer).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations: 2/6/98 [DPS].
Passed Senate, 2/14/98, 44-3.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6667 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators McCaslin, Chair; Hale, Vice Chair; Anderson, Haugen, Horn and T. Sheldon.

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 need of donated organs 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 Gift of Life 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 organ procurement organization is defined as any accredited or certified organ or eye bank.

An application procedure for the Washington State Gift of Life medal is specified. Family members of the organ donor may apply or an accredited 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 primary 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.