

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6718

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As of February 3, 1998

**Title:** An act relating to immunity for state and local government agencies and their employees for harm caused by incorrectly calculated or interpreted dates associated with year 2000 date changes processed by electronic computing devices.

**Brief Description:** Providing immunity for problems associated with year 2000 date conversion.

**Sponsors:** Senators Finkbeiner, Hochstatter and Oke.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Energy & Utilities: 2/3/98.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & UTILITIES

**Staff:** Karen Kirkpatrick (786-7403)

**Background:** For decades, business and government computer programmers around the world saved expensive data storage space and data entry time by storing the year as two digits (98) instead of four (1998). As a result, mainframe and personal computers, software of all kinds, and traffic control, medical and other equipment having microprocessors interpret "00" as the year 1900 rather than 2000. These systems can fail or cause errors for years beyond 1999.

**Summary of Bill:** Recourse is limited against agencies for damages caused by computational errors arising out of the year 2000 date change. In the event of an agency or contractor's failure to perform, the remedies are as set forth in their written contract. In the event of an agency's failure to deliver services, entitlements or compensation, the remedies available to the citizen or client are limited to the existing administrative procedures or remedies provided by law. Neither an agency nor its employees may be held liable in any other action whether based in tort, contract, or otherwise.

The intent of the Legislature is stated to recognize that it is a complex and difficult challenge to prepare agency-owned electronic devices for the year 2000, that due diligence is used to provide uninterrupted services, but that even due diligence may not suffice to prevent failures, and in the event of such failures, that affected individuals or entities have recourse to existing administrative or contractual remedies but not to other compensation.

Definitions are added and other clarifying and technical changes are made.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Effective Date:** The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

