

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5201

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Health & Long-Term Care, February 17, 1999  
Ways & Means, March 1, 1999

**Title:** An act relating to vital statistics.

**Brief Description:** Increasing fees for the production of certain records.

**Sponsors:** Senators Thibaudeau and Deccio; by request of Department of Health.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Health & Long-Term Care: 1/21/99, 2/17/99 [DPS-WM].  
Ways & Means: 2/24/99, 3/1/99 [DPS (HEA)].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5201 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Thibaudeau, Chair; Wojahn, Vice Chair; Deccio, Johnson and Winsley.

**Staff:** Christopher Blake (786-7446)

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5201 as recommended by Committee on Health & Long-Term Care be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Loveland, Chair; Bauer, Vice Chair; Brown, Vice Chair; Fairley, Fraser, Kline, Kohl-Welles, Rasmussen, B. Sheldon, Snyder, Spanel, Thibaudeau, Winsley and Wojahn.

**Staff:** Brian Sims (786-7431)

**Background:** The Department of Health maintains the state's system of vital records and statistics in the Center for Health Statistics (CHS). Individuals may obtain certified copies of birth, death, marriage and divorce certificates from CHS or search its database for a fee. The fees currently range from \$8 to \$13. In 1992, CHS introduced the Automated Birth Certificate system which allows people to obtain copies of these documents through their local health department instead of Olympia. While more convenient for the individual, the new system has resulted in a shifting of funds from CHS to the local health departments. The department would like to increase the fees charged to individuals using these services in order to accommodate for this loss of funds and to improve its vital records services.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** The fees that the Department of Health and local registrars charge for copies of records and for searches of records are raised by \$2. The sum that the local registrar must submit to the State Treasurer for each copy or search is raised by \$1. The additional \$1 submitted to the State Treasurer must then be transferred to the Department of Health. These provisions relating to the establishment of fees expire on July 1, 2001. The Board of Health is authorized to set fees, according to specified criteria, for copying and searching services after July 1, 2001, according to its rulemaking authority.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** The substitute establishes criteria for the department to follow when setting fees by rulemaking.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed, except Section 2, which takes effect July 1, 2001.

**Testimony For:** Additional money for the vital statistics system will give the public simple, convenient, and efficient access to records and allow the department to preserve and continue to modernize the program.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Elizabeth Ward, Department of Health (pro); Stephen Kutz, Washington State Association of Local Public Health Departments (pro); Laura Pemberton Sparr, Washington State Genealogical Society (pro); Teresa Jennings, Department of Health (pro).