

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5739

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As Passed Senate, February 2, 2000

**Title:** An act relating to certificates of death or fetal death.

**Brief Description:** Preparing certificates of death or fetal death.

**Sponsors:** Senators Thibaudeau and Deccio.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Health & Long-Term Care: 2/18/99, 2/22/99 [DP].  
Passed Senate, 3/13/99, 44-0; 2/2/00, 44-0.

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

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

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

**Staff:** Jinnah Rose-McFadden (786-7444)

**Background:** Currently the Washington Administrative Code authorizes physician's assistants to sign and attest to death certificates. The Administrative Code also gives an advanced registered nurse practitioner-certified midwife the authority to certify death or fetal death. These responsibilities, however, are not currently reflected in the Revised Code of Washington's provisions regarding death certificates.

**Summary of Bill:** A funeral director or person in charge of interment may present a certificate of death to a physician's assistant or an advanced registered nurse practitioner to certify death or fetal death when he or she is the last person in attendance of the deceased.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For:** These are technical amendments that will clarify the current state of the law.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Jeff Larsen, WAPA, WOMA (pro); Jerry Farley, ARNPs United (pro).

**House Amendment(s):** The bill is amended to include provisions requiring training for death investigators who investigate the sudden and unexplained deaths of children under the age of

three. Training must include a death scene investigation protocol that is endorsed or developed by the Washington State Forensic Investigations Council (council). Similar training is required for all city and county law enforcement officers and emergency medical personnel.

The council must develop a protocol addressing autopsies of children under the age of three, whose deaths were sudden and unexplained. Pathologists who are not certified in forensic pathology must use this protocol. A county may be reimbursed for the cost of an autopsy of a child, where specific criteria is met.

Each council must use a protocol for crime scene investigations involving the sudden and unexplained deaths of children under three.