

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6666

As Passed Senate, February 15, 2000

Title: An act relating to household goods carriers operating without a permit.

Brief Description: Denying telecommunications services to unlicensed household goods carriers.

Sponsors: Senators Gardner, Swecker, Haugen, Morton and Sellar.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/7/2000, 2/8/2000 [DP, DNP].
Passed Senate, 2/15/2000, 43-5.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Gardner, Vice Chair; Goings, Vice Chair; Benton, Costa, Eide, Heavey, Jacobsen, Oke, Prentice and Shin.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Finkbeiner, Horn, Johnson and Swecker.

Staff: Jennifer Ziegler (786-7316)

Background: The Utilities and Transportation Commission regulates household goods carriers (moving and storage companies) under the motor freight carrier statutes. When a household goods carrier is not in compliance with the commission's regulations, the commission can order the carrier to cease and desist, and then must enforce the cease and desist order in superior court by obtaining an injunction. If the carrier continues to violate the court's order, the commission must file an action of contempt of court.

Summary of Bill: The Legislature declares that the unlawful advertisement, use of telecommunications services, and provision of household goods moving services by unlicensed household goods carriers constitutes an unfair trade practice.

The superior court of a county has the power, upon petition of the Utilities and Transportation Commission, to order a telecommunications company to change or terminate the phone number of an entity advertising for or providing household goods moving services in violation of permit laws. If a phone number is terminated, it may not be reused by any telecommunications company for one year.

Telecommunications companies must notify a subscriber of the termination within five business days of the termination and enclose a copy of the court order with the termination and enclose a court order with the copy of the termination.

Any entity believing it has been negatively affected may petition the court for reconsideration or file a complaint with the commission.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 4, 2000.

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

Testimony For: This bill puts all movers on a level playing field. Some carriers operate illegally and this bill ensures that everyone is treated fairly. Illegal operations flourish currently because they can place their phone numbers in the paper.

Testimony Against: This penalty is only appropriate if there is full competition in the household goods industry. It is currently difficult to get a permanent permit and thus, there is limited competition in the industry.

Testified: PRO: Larry Pursley, Jay Lawley, WA Trucking Assn.; CON: Brian McCulloch; Bruce Palm, Affordable Moving Services.