

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2926

As Reported by House Committee On:
Appropriations

Title: An act relating to a state library.

Brief Description: Establishing the state library in the office of the secretary of state.

Sponsors: Representatives Clements and Grant.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Appropriations: 2/27/02, 3/4/02 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Creates a state library within the Office of the Secretary of State.
- Abolishes the State Library and the State Library Commission, and their respective duties.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 24 members: Representatives Sommers, Chair; Doumit, 1st Vice Chair; Fromhold, 2nd Vice Chair; Sehlin, Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Boldt, Buck, Clements, Cody, Cox, Grant, Kagi, Kenney, Kessler, Linville, Lisk, Mastin, McIntire, Pearson, Pflug, Ruderman, Schual-Berke, Talcott and Tokuda.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Dunshee.

Staff: Patricia Linehan (786-7178).

Background:

The 1853 Organic Act that created the Territory of Washington provided for the establishment of a territorial library, and the State Library was created shortly after statehood. The library's primary mission is serving the government's information needs.

The major functions of the library are:

- providing reference and research support to the Legislature and state government agencies;
- serving as a central depository for current and retrospective collections of state and federal documents, newspapers, and state historical information;
- supporting the establishment, development, and coordination of local library service statewide;
- providing library services to residents and staff of correctional institutions, psychiatric hospitals, and institutions for the developmentally disabled; and
- providing online access to state and local government information.

Legislation enacted in 2000 directed the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) to study the mission, programs, and usage of the State Library. The WSIPP found that the library's mission is sound, but that the ways in which information is delivered to the Legislature and state agencies needed to change significantly. The WSIPP made the following recommendations:

- Accelerate the move from print to online content by joining a larger purchasing unit with the publicly funded academic libraries.
- Focus the library's activities more sharply than they are today. Implementing a limited market system by instituting fees for service would help clarify the relative value of services for users.
- Implement a more aggressive book "weeding" campaign.
- Reduce the physical presence of the library on the capitol campus and develop more appropriate space for technical and service functions elsewhere.

The Governor's Proposed 2002 Supplemental Operating Appropriations Bill eliminates state support for the operation of the State Library, with the exception of the Washington Talking Book and Braille Library, effective October 1, 2002.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The State Library, the State Library Commission and their respective duties are abolished. A state library is established within the Office of the Secretary of State. The governance, including rule making authority, and all employees of the State Library and the State Library Commission are transferred to the Office of the Secretary of State. The state librarian is appointed by, and serves at the pleasure of, the Secretary of State.

The Office of the Secretary of State will receive all corresponding assets, tangible property, books, records, files, documents and reports in the possession of the State Library and State Library Commission. The powers, functions and duties are transferred, and all rules and pending business before the State Library and State Library Commission will be continued by the Office of the Secretary of State.

All existing contracts and obligations will remain in full force and will be performed by the Office of the Secretary of State. Any appropriations made to the State Library and State Library Commission will be transferred and credited to the Office of the Secretary of State and will take place on July 1, 2002.

Additional duties are assigned to the state librarian, including establishing content-related standards for state agency produced information; accepting, expending and making applications for grants; and licensing professional librarians.

Any reduction-in-force actions that take place on or before June 30, 2005, will only provide layoff rights to positions that were within either of the separate agencies as the agencies existed on June 30, 2002.

Technical changes are made to references to the State Library Commission.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The primary difference between the original bill and the substitute is that the governance, rule making authority, all employees and any appropriations of the State Library are transferred, along with all books, records, files, papers, documents and reports in the possession of the State Library and State Library Commission, to the Office of the Secretary of State. The state librarian will also be responsible for accepting and expending grants, and assisting in the establishment and development of library services throughout the state. The substitute bill also clarifies that any reduction-in-force actions that occur on or before June 30, 2005, will only provide layoff rights to positions that were within either of the separate agencies as the agencies existed on June 30, 2002.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect on July 1, 2002.

Testimony For: This bill takes the appropriate steps to preserve the integrity of the state library and puts the state library system under the control of the Secretary of State. There is virtual consensus from the library community to merge the state library within the Office of the Secretary of State. There are natural synergies between the state library and Secretary of State's office. There are many new opportunities for collaboration and partnerships as services are re-engineered during the leaner times and as the information industry changes. The Washington State Library Commission is in unanimous support of the proposed substitute. The merger will create savings of over \$450,000.

For 58 years, during the first few decades of statehood, the State Library was a part of

the Secretary of State's office and it is a natural fit with the state archives function. The Office of Secretary of State is dedicated to working with all of the stakeholders as a future merge is considered. Librarians are great people and hardworking professionals who provide a valuable service, especially in this age of knowledge based workers. The Senior Citizens' Lobby unanimously opposes the elimination of the state library and supports the proposed substitute bill. The Washington Library Association confirms that there is unanimous support in the library community for the substitute bill.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Clements, p-rime sponsor; John Sheller, Washington Library Association; Sam Reed, Secretary of State; Steve Excell, Office of the Secretary of State; Anne Haley, Washington State Library Commission; Gene Forrester, Washington Senior Citizens' Lobby; and Thelma Kruse, Timberland Regional Library.