

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6745

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
State & Local Government, February 7, 2002

**Title:** An act relating to death certificates.

**Brief Description:** Implementing a web-based electronic death certificate registration system.

**Sponsors:** Senators Haugen, Benton, Keiser, B. Sheldon, Poulsen, Winsley, Zarelli, Johnson, Gardner, Hewitt, Prentice, Finkbeiner, Horn, Regala, Rasmussen, Honeyford and Kline.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** State & Local Government: 2/4/02, 2/7/02 [DPS].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6745 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Gardner, Chair; Fairley, Vice Chair; Hale, Haugen, Keiser, Kline, McCaslin, Roach and Swecker.

**Staff:** Mac Nicholson (786-7445)

**Background:** The Department of Health's Center for Health statistics does not maintain a web-based electronic death certificate registration system.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** The Department of Health and all local registrars must charge a surcharge of \$1 for each fee imposed for certified copies of records and for copies or information provided for research, statistical, or administrative purposes, or for a search of the files or records when no copy is made. All the revenue generated through this surcharge must be transmitted to the treasurer quarterly, who must distribute the funds to the Department of Health's Center for Health statistics, for the sole purpose of implementing a web-based electronic death certificate registration system. The surcharge imposed expires July, 1, 2006.

The web-based electronic death certificate registration system must include a function that automatically provides county auditors and the Secretary of State with death information so those entities can update their voter registration records.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** The substitute bill requires the web-based electronic death certificate registration system to automatically send notice of death to the Secretary of State and county auditors so they can update their voter registration records.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on February 1, 2002.

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

**Testimony For:** The current system takes too long to issue death certificates. An electronic database for birth certificates was created in 1998, and the Department of Health planned to implement an electronic database for death certificates shortly thereafter, but nothing has happened.

**Testimony Against:** The Legislature shouldn't force the Department of Health (DOH) to implement this system. DOH is examining the systems of other states to implement a system in Washington free of errors. DOH should be allowed to develop the system at its own pace, keeping in mind the resources needed to both implement and maintain the system.

**Testified:** PRO: James Noel and T.K. Bentler, WA State Funeral Directors Assn.; Rick Wickman, WA Cemetery and Funeral Assn. CON: Patty Hayes, DOH.