

FINAL BILL REPORT

SHB 1826

C 268 L 03

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Requiring additional personal history information from customers of international matchmaking organizations.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Criminal Justice & Corrections (originally sponsored by Representatives Veloria, McMahan, O'Brien, Kenney, Boldt, Mielke, Santos, Hudgins, Upthegrove, Simpson and Conway).

House Committee on Criminal Justice & Corrections

Senate Committee on Judiciary

Senate Committee on Children & Family Services & Corrections

Background:

Foreign social referral agencies, also known as international matchmaking organizations, bring together approximately 4,000 to 6,000 couples annually, who eventually marry and petition for immigration of the female spouse. Many of the female spouses come to the United States from the Philippines and from the independent states of the former Soviet Union.

The Immigration and Naturalization Service estimates there are over 200 international matchmaking organizations operating in the United States. Federal law requires these organizations to provide accurate information about immigration laws to prospective foreign spouses in their native language.

In Washington, international matchmaking organizations must notify foreign prospective spouses that background check and marital history information is available for prospective spouses who are Washington residents. Notice must be in writing in the recruit's native language. Upon a request for such information, the organization must notify the Washington resident prospective spouse. The Washington resident must obtain a background check report from the Washington State Patrol, and must provide the report and his or her marital history information to the organization.

The organization must forward the background report and marital history information to the foreign prospective spouse. Organizations may not knowingly provide continued services to facilitate further interaction between the prospective spouses until the organization has received the information from the Washington client and forwarded it to the foreign client.

Summary:

International matchmaking organizations doing business in Washington State must notify foreign recruits stating that they may have access to background and personal (instead of solely marital) information about a Washington State resident using the matchmaking services. In addition, international matchmaking organizations must make personal (instead of solely marital) history information available to foreign recruits that request such information.

Personal history information includes the person's current marital status, the number of previous marriages, annulments, and dissolutions for the person, whether any previous marriages occurred as a result of receiving services from an international matchmaking organization; any founded allegations of child abuse or neglect; and whether there are any existing antiharassment protection orders, domestic violence protection orders, and domestic violence no-contact orders against the person.

Votes on Final Passage:

House 94 0

Senate 46 2 (Senate amended)

House 97 0 (House concurred)

Effective: July 27, 2003