
Commerce & Labor Committee

HB 3186

Brief Description: Regulating contact centers.

Sponsors: Representatives Hudgins, Conway and Romero.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires contract center employees, upon request, to identify their employer's identity and location.
- Prohibits contact center employees from soliciting personal information from another party without the other party's disclosure and consent.
- Requires entities offering goods for sale that contract with contact centers to require compliance with these provisions, and to notify buyers of contact center locations.
- Makes violations of these provisions unfair acts for purposes of applying the state Consumer Protection Act.

Hearing Date:

Staff: Jill Reinmuth (786-7134).

Background:

Neither federal law nor Washington law requires disclosure of call center locations or establishes other requirements pertaining to call center operations. Laws in other states are similarly silent.

Summary of Bill:

The Legislature finds that consumer rights when dealing with contact centers need greater protection. These rights include rights to know who they have contacted and where they are located, to receive truthful information, and to engage in secure financial transactions.

Upon request, employees of contact centers must identify the name and location of their employer, and if applicable, entities contracting with the contact center.

Employees of contact centers may not solicit personal information unless they inform the other parties that disclosure of such information is optional and the other parties consent to such disclosure.

If entities offering goods for sale contract with contact centers, the terms of such contracts must require contact centers to comply with the provisions requiring contact center employees to identify their employers and to obtain consent before soliciting personal information. In addition, such entities must disclose the locations of the contact centers in a notice to buyers.

The terms "contact center" and "personal information" are defined. A "contact center" is a physical or electronic operation that uses telephonic or electronic communications for specified activities such as soliciting sales, or taking orders or reservations. "Personal information" includes information such as a person's name, Social Security number, and credit or other financial information.

Violations of these provisions are unfair acts for purposes of applying the state Consumer Protection Act.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 5, 2004.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.