

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5970

As Passed House:

April 11, 2003

Title: An act relating to correcting a technical error to clarify that the family law handbook shall be provided when a person applies for a marriage license.

Brief Description: Requiring that the family law handbook be provided when a person applies for a marriage license.

Sponsors: By Senator Hargrove.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Juvenile Justice & Family Law: 3/27/03, 4/2/03 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 4/11/03, 84-2.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the county auditor to distribute a family law handbook to an individual who applies for a marriage license.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUVENILE JUSTICE & FAMILY LAW

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Dickerson, Chair; Pettigrew, Vice Chair; Delvin, Ranking Minority Member; Carrell, Eickmeyer, Hinkle and Upthegrove.

Staff: Sonja Hallum (786-7092).

Background:

In 2002 the Legislature created a requirement that the county auditor provide a family law handbook containing certain information relating to the marital relationship to a person who files a marriage certificate.

The Legislature declared that strong marital relationships result in stronger families, children, and communities, and place less of a fiscal burden on the state. The

Legislature also declared that the state has a compelling interest to provide couples applying for a marriage license with information regarding marriage and the effects of divorce.

The law required the Office of the Administrator of the Courts to develop a family law handbook that contains the following information:

- prenuptial agreements;
- shared parental responsibility for children, including establishing a residential schedule for the child in the event of divorce;
- information on notice requirements and standards for parental relocation;
- information on child support;
- property rights;
- spousal maintenance;
- domestic violence, child abuse, and neglect;
- court process for dissolution;
- effects of dissolution on children; and
- community resources that are available to separating or divorcing persons.

The handbook is to be given by the county auditor to persons filing marriage certificates.

Summary of Bill:

The county auditor is required to distribute the family law handbook to an individual who applies for a marriage license, rather than distributing the handbook to the individual at the time he or she files the marriage license.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

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

Testimony For: This is a technical bill. The intent was that the handbook was to be provided to people who are getting married. The information is to be given to people before they get married. People spend more time planning their weddings than planning their marriages. The Washington State Bar Association has produced the first draft of the handbook.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: (In support) Senator Hargrove, prime sponsor; and Larry Kvamme.

