

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 2387

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Children & Family Services & Corrections, February 26, 2004

Title: An act relating to the release of patient records for the purpose of restoring state mental health hospital cemeteries.

Brief Description: Authorizing the release of patient records for the purpose of restoring state mental health hospital cemeteries.

Sponsors: Representatives Carrell, Talcott, Bush, Lantz, Cox, Pearson, McMahan, Kristiansen, Mielke, Boldt, Morrell, Orcutt and Ahern.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Children & Family Services & Corrections: 2/26/04 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Stevens, Chair; Parlette, Vice Chair; Carlson, Deccio, Hargrove, McAuliffe and Regala.

Staff: Fara Daun (786-7459)

Background: From 1887 to 1953, the state buried many patients who died while patients at the state hospitals in cemeteries on hospital grounds. There are efforts in progress to restore these cemeteries and appropriately memorialize the graves of the persons interred there. Current state confidentiality laws prevent the release of these patients' records for this purpose.

Summary of Amended Bill: The Department of Social and Health Services may release the names and dates of birth and death of patients buried in state hospital cemeteries 50 years after their death, for the purpose of marking headstones or otherwise memorializing these patients.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: The original bill was not considered. The amendment makes technical corrections.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: The view of the mentally ill by society has changed dramatically in the 135 years since the first person was buried at a state hospital. It is time to properly memorialize these graves. Part of the cemetery at Northern State Hospital was farmed over years ago and

that is not something that should have ever happened in this country. There was a good hearing on the Senate companion bill that identified all the issues.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Mike Carrell, sponsor (pro); Senator Karen Keiser, sponsor of Senate companion bill (pro).

Signed In/Did Not Testify: Stacey Larsen, NAMI of Thurston and Mason Counties, was precluded due to time, but the Chair recognized her testimony on the Senate bill (pro).