

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5509

As Passed Senate, March 11, 2003

Title: An act relating to the organ donor registry.

Brief Description: Creating a voluntary organ and tissue donor registry.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators B. Sheldon, Kohl-Welles, Deccio and Winsley).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 2/5/03, 2/27/03 [DPS].

Passed Senate: 3/11/03, 47-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5509 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Deccio, Chair; Winsley, Vice Chair; Brandland, Franklin, Keiser, Parlette and Thibaudeau.

Staff: Tanya Karwaki (786-7447)

Background: Washington's Uniform Anatomical Gift Act permits a person to donate all or part of his or her body to another person. Such an organ donor may indicate his or her intent to donate by signing a "document of gift." This document may be a driver's license or a donor card. Unless the donor revokes his or her gift before death, the donation may occur without the consent of another person.

Approximately 80,000 people are on a national transplant waiting list; 1,200 of these are listed at Washington State transplant centers.

Concern exists that organ procurement in Washington is not sufficiently timely and successful.

Summary of Bill: A statewide organ and tissue donor registry is created. The Department of Licensing must electronically transfer the information on the driver's license or identicard of an organ donor to the federally designated organ procurement organization. The procurement organization shall then use this information to create a statewide organ and tissue donor registry. The procurement organization may also include information acquired from sources other than the Department of Licensing.

All reasonable costs of creating and maintaining the registry are paid by Washington State organ procurement organizations.

Participation in the registry is not a requirement for being an organ donor. Any donors that are part of the registry, however, must notify the procurement organization if they revoke their donation so that their names may be removed from the registry.

An "organ and tissue donation awareness account" is created. The Department of Licensing must ask applicants for a new or renewed vehicle registration whether they would like to donate one dollar or more to the organ and tissue donation awareness account. Moneys collected by the Department of Licensing shall be credited to the organ and tissue donation awareness account and transmitted to the Living Legacy Foundation. Money from the account may only be used for organ and tissue awareness programs and for reimbursement of reasonable costs associated with creating and maintaining the registry.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Currently, there is no organ and tissue donor registry in Washington. 74 percent of Washington residents surveyed, however, thought that there was a donor registry. Washington residents are dying because organ donors are not promptly identified. This bill would provide such a registry at no cost to the state. The Department of Licensing already has the equipment in place to facilitate the electronic transfer of information.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Sheldon (sponsor); Vicki Austin, LifeCenter Northwest (pro); Jill Steinhaus, LifeCenter Northwest (pro); Judy Grogan, LifeCenter Northwest (pro); Debbie Whitlock, LifeCenter Northwest (pro).

House Amendment(s): Definitions for "Washington State organ procurement organization" and "reasonable costs" are added. It clarifies that any Washington State organ procurement organization may establish a statewide organ and tissue donor registry. The organ and tissue donation awareness account is created as a nonappropriated fund. The Legislature may appropriate funds from the account to the Department of Licensing for the costs of maintaining the registry. Funds from the account must be used proportionally across the state and may not be used for out-of-state programs. The effective date for the donation program is changed to apply to registrations on or after January 1, 2004.