
**Criminal Justice & Corrections
Committee**

SSB 5035

Brief Description: Revising the forensic pathology program.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Thibaudeau, Brandland and Franklin).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Eliminates the University of Washington's Forensic Pathology Fellowship Program.
- Requires the Washington State Forensic Investigations Council (Council) to study and make recommendations regarding the need for a state forensic pathologist program.
- Requires the State Treasurer to make disbursements to the Council to fund the state forensic program.

Hearing Date: 3/22/05

Staff: Yvonne Walker (786-7841).

Background:

The Washington State Forensic Investigations Council (Council) is a 12 member committee appointed by the Governor to oversee death investigations as part of the state's criminal justice system. The Council authorizes expenditures from the council's death investigations account for the purpose of assisting local jurisdictions in the investigation of multiple deaths involving unanticipated, extraordinary, and catastrophic events, or involving multiple jurisdictions. The Council also oversees the Washington State Patrol's Bureau of Forensic Laboratory Services (Bureau) and actively prepares and approves the Bureau's budget prior to submission to the Office of Financial Management.

The Council and the University of Washington's School of Medicine jointly oversee the state Forensic Pathology Fellowship Program. The program provides training for one person per year and is funded out of the Death Investigations Account of the state's General Fund.

Summary of Bill:

The state's Forensic Pathology Fellowship Program is eliminated. The provisions requiring the State Treasurer to make disbursements to the University of Washington for the pathology program are also eliminated.

The Council must study and make recommendations to the Legislature regarding the need for establishing a state forensic pathologist program. The Council's recommendations must include information regarding the state forensic pathologist's annual salary, budget, and duties. The study and recommendations are due to the Legislature by December 1, 2005. The State Treasurer must make disbursements to the Council to fund the state forensic program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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