

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5884

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Government Operations & Elections, March 1, 2005

**Title:** An act relating to the statute law committee.

**Brief Description:** Reorganizing legislative committees.

**Sponsors:** Senator Kastama.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Government Operations & Elections: 2/21/05, 3/1/05 [DPS, DNP].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5884 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Kastama, Chair; Berkey, Vice Chair; Fairley, Haugen, Kline, Mulliken and Pridemore.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Roach, Ranking Minority Member; and Benton.

**Staff:** Diane Smith (786-7410)

**Background:** Created in 1951, the Statute Law Committee is a permanent committee consisting of twelve members. These twelve members are statutorily designated to be lawyers, though in practice, not all members are lawyers. Five serve two-year terms in an ex officio capacity as follows: one lawyer member of the legislature appointed by the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate; the chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee plus another member of the committee who is appointed by the chair and of a political party other than the chair's; the chair of the House Judiciary Committee plus another member of the committee who is appointed by the chair and of a political party other than the chair's.

The seven other members of the Statute Law Committee are as follows: five lawyers appointed to six-year terms by the Washington State Bar Association; one judge of the Supreme Court who serves at the pleasure of the Chief Justice; one lawyer at large who is appointed to a four-year term by the Governor.

The Statute Law Committee employs the Code Reviser and the Code Reviser's legal and clerical staff. The committee has general supervision and control over the functions and performance of the Code Reviser. The Code Reviser must be a lawyer deemed qualified by the committee. He or she is in charge of and maintains an expert bill drafting service for the use of the legislature.

The Statute Law Committee also publishes the Revised Code of Washington (RCW); may loan and exchange sets of the code; publishes the Washington State Register; and publishes the Washington Administrative Code (WAC).

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** The Statute Law Committee is reduced from twelve to the following eleven members:

- 1) the Secretary of the Senate, ex officio;
- 2) two members of the Senate, one from each caucus, appointed by the President of the Senate;
- 3) the chief clerk of the House of Representatives, ex officio;
- 4) two members of the House of Representatives, one from each caucus, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;
- 5) the Staff Director of Senate Committee Services, ex officio;
- 6) the Staff Director of the House Office of Program Research, ex officio;
- 7) a lawyer appointed by the Washington State Bar Association;
- 8) a judge of the State Supreme Court, appointed by the Chief Justice; and
- 9) a lawyer staff member of the Governor's office or a state agency, appointed by the Governor.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** The original bill was not considered. The bill heard in committee was a substitute bill that configured the statute law committee with two members less than has the substitute bill that passed out of committee. The bill passed out of committee has two more members than the bill heard in committee because four members of the legislature replace the two staff lawyers, one from each caucus.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

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

**Testimony For:** The statute law committee was originally conceived to publish the revised code. Its purpose has changed. Complaints about customer service have been brought.

**Testimony Against:** The substitute just changes the membership. It profoundly changes the way we do business and should not be enacted. Complaints have never been brought to him.

**Who Testified:** Dennis Cooper, Code Reviser. PRO: Senator Kastama, prime sponsor.

CON: John G. Schultz, Statute Law Committee.