

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6717

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Human Services & Corrections, January 31, 2006

Title: An act relating to the joint task force on criminal background check processes.

Brief Description: Extending the joint task force on criminal background check processes.

Sponsors: Senators Kohl-Welles, Brandland, McAuliffe, Hargrove, Rockefeller, Shin, Rasmussen, Schmidt and Stevens.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services & Corrections: 1/31/06 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6717 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Hargrove, Chair; Regala, Vice Chair; Stevens, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Carrell, McAuliffe and Thibaudeau.

Staff: Indu Thomas (786-7459)

Background: Criminal history record information background checks are conducted for employment and licensing decisions and many other purposes related to the security of persons and property. In 2004, the Washington State Legislature passed ESHB2556 (Chapter 41 of the Laws of 2004). This bill created a Joint Task Force on Criminal Background Check Processes to make recommendations to the Legislature and the Governor regarding how to improve the state's criminal background check processes. In 2005, the Legislature passed Substitute House Bill 1681 which extended the work of the task force through the end of the 2005 year.

The Task Force held six public meetings in 2004, and made recommendations. In 2005, the task force once again held six public meetings. The task force made six recommendations to be addressed in the 2006 legislative session including extending the work of the task force for one additional year. In addition the recommendations for the 2006 legislative session, the Task Force also identified two long-term objectives.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The statute creating the Task Force is extended for an additional year. A representative of the Washington State Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers is added to the membership of the task force. The Task Force is authorized to continue its work until December 31, 2006, at which time it must report its findings and recommendations to the Legislature.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute expands the membership of the task force to include a member of the criminal defense bar.

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 task force presented a report to the legislature which outlines the work of the task force. The issues surrounding criminal back-ground checks are very complex. The task force needs more time to finish the work that they have begun. The Washington Defender Association and Washington Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers have been also been working on the issue of criminal background checks. A criminal defense attorney on the task force would be able to provide valuable assistance in increasing the public's confidence in the process.

Testimony Against: None

Who Testified: PRO: Senator Kohl-Welles, prime sponsor, Mary Neff, Washington State Patrol, Pam Crone, Washington Defenders Association and Washington Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, CON: None.