

SENATE BILL REPORT

SJM 8023

As of April 4, 2005

Brief Description: Requesting an audit of the performance of the International Commission on Holocaust-Era Insurance Claims.

Sponsors: Senators Kline and Jacobsen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Financial Institutions, Housing & Consumer Protection:

SENATE COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS, HOUSING & CONSUMER PROTECTION

Staff: Joyce Ahlering (786-7486)

Background: Decades after the Holocaust, many of its victims' insurance policies remain unpaid. In 1998, the International Commission of the Holocaust-Era Insurance Claims (ICHEIC) was created to establish a claims process for over 80,000 unpaid policy claims. Although the ICHEIC is scheduled to complete its work in mid-2006, the majority of its claims remain unresolved.

In 1999, the Washington Legislature established the Washington State Holocaust Survivors Assistance Office within the Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC issued a report in 2004 that referenced significant problems within the ICHEIC claims process. Of the 195 state residents who have filed 762 claims with the ICHEIC, 19 have received 31 claim offers, and 52 have received humanitarian fund payments.

Summary of Bill: The ICHEIC is requested to authorize and support an independent audit of its performance. The U.S. Department of State and the appropriate congressional committees are requested to review the status of the Holocaust insurance claims process and support remedies for resolving claims. Finally, other state legislatures and the state Insurance Commissioner are requested to support the ICHEIC audit.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.