

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6548

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Human Services & Corrections, February 07, 2008

Title: An act relating to prohibiting patients at the special commitment center and less restrictive alternatives from having computer access.

Brief Description: Prohibiting patients at the special commitment center or less restrictive alternatives from having computer access.

Sponsors: Senator Carrell.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services & Corrections: 2/7/08 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6548 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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

Staff: Kevin Black (786-7747)

Background: Persons who are found to be sexually violent predators under chapter 71.09 RCW are committed to the Special Commitment Center (SCC) for treatment of sexual pathology. A resident of the SCC may be released to a less restrictive alternative if the person no longer meets the definition of a sexually violent predator or conditional release is in the best interest of the person and conditions can be imposed that adequately protect the community.

In April 2007, a resident of the SCC was found to be in possession of contraband pornography in violation of SCC rules and the resident's sex offender treatment plan.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Substitute): A resident of the SCC or a sex offender conditionally released from the SCC is prohibited from accessing a personal computer and accessing the Internet unless the resident's treatment plan states that access to a computer is necessary to the success of treatment.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS COMMITTEE (Recommended Substitute): Computer access will be allowed for residents

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of the SCC or former residents released on a less restrictive order if necessary to bring about a positive response to a specific and certain phase or course of treatment.

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.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: There is frustration over the ease by which electronic contraband is smuggled into the SCC, including child pornography. The bill would let SCC decide when access to computers is appropriate.

OTHER: SCC has struggled with the problem of electronic contraband, and to protect the treatment environment from this material. There are other ways to fix this problem, which are expensive in terms of staff time. There will be implementation problems and potential litigation issues from the bill, but it is one way to solve the problem.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Carrell, prime sponsor.

OTHER: Henry Richards, Superintendent of Special Commitment Center.