

**HB 1518 - DIGEST**

(SEE ALSO PROPOSED 1ST SUB)

Finds that historically most death sentences imposed in Washington have been reversed and rarely imposed. The legislature further finds that it is in the state's interest to determine whether the state's capital punishment system is applied fairly and proportionally, and whether the continued allocation of substantial time, resources, and moneys spent on capital trials and appeals is warranted.

Provides that, until July 1, 2008, the sentence of death for anyone sentenced under RCW 10.95.030(2) shall be stayed.

Creates a death penalty task force for the purpose of conducting a review of the existing death penalty statutes and court rules to determine the following: (1) The uniformity of decision making by prosecuting attorneys in terms of charging defendants with aggravated first degree murder and the criteria used in such decisions;

(2) The impact of race, ethnicity, gender, and economic status on the likelihood of a defendant being charged with aggravated first degree murder;

(3) The administration of Washington's death penalty law since the enactment of chapter 10.95 RCW to determine whether it is applied randomly or arbitrarily;

(4) The costs associated with capital trials and appeals;  
and

(5) Whether there are revisions to existing statutes and court rules that, if implemented, would decrease the likelihood of an inappropriate imposition of the death penalty.

Directs the task force to report its findings and recommendations to the governor, Washington supreme court, and appropriate committees of the legislature by January 1, 2008.

Appropriates the sum of fifty thousand dollars, or as much thereof as may be necessary, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2007, from the state general fund to the administrative office of the courts for the purposes of providing staffing and support to the death penalty task force.

Appropriates the sum of one hundred thousand dollars, or as much thereof as may be necessary, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2008, from the state general fund to the administrative office of the courts for the purposes of providing staffing and support to the death penalty task force.