

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## SSB 6591

---

---

### C 85 L 10

Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Revising the procedure for complaints filed with the human rights commission.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Judiciary (originally sponsored by Senators Kline, Berkey, Gordon, Keiser and Prentice).

**Senate Committee on Judiciary**  
**House Committee on Judiciary**

**Background:** Under the Washington Law Against Discrimination (WLAD), it is an unfair practice to discriminate in real estate transactions based on race; creed; color; national origin; sex; honorably discharged veteran or military status; sexual orientation; families with children status; the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability; or the use of a trained guide dog or service animal by a person with a disability. A real estate transaction includes the sale, purchase, rental, or leasing of real property.

The Washington State Human Rights Commission (Commission) is responsible, in part, for administering and enforcing the WLAD. The Commission receives and investigates all complaints that allege unfair practices in violation of the WLAD. If the Commission finds that there is reasonable cause to believe that discrimination has occurred, it must first try to eliminate the unfair practice through conference and conciliation. If the parties do not reach an agreement, the Commission must refer the matter to an administrative law judge who may, after a hearing on the matter, issue an order providing relief to the complainant.

**Summary:** The initial review and investigation requirements of complaints alleging unfair practices in violation of the WLAD are changed. Upon receipt of a complaint, Commission staff must first review and evaluate the complaint. If the facts as stated in the complaint do not constitute an unfair practice under the WLAD, a finding of no reasonable cause may be made without further investigation. If the facts stated in the complaint could constitute an unfair practice, then the Commission staff conducts a full investigation and ascertainment of the facts.

As part of the review and evaluation of the complaint, if the complainant has limitations related to language proficiency or a cognitive impairment, then the Commission staff are required to contact the complainant directly and make the appropriate inquiries regarding the facts of the complaint.

---

*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

However, if the complaint alleges an unfair practice in a real estate transaction, then the Commission staff must conduct a full investigation and ascertainment of the facts.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

Senate	48	0
House	96	0

**Effective:** June 10, 2010