

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6786

As of February 8, 2010

Title: An act relating to restructuring state government.

Brief Description: Creating a commission to restructure state government.

Sponsors: Senators Kastama, Swecker, Eide, Delvin, Hobbs, King, Murray, Hatfield, Berkey, Marr, Tom, Oemig, Haugen and Keiser.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Elections: 2/04/10.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

Staff: Sharon Swanson (786-7447)

Background: In Article III, Section 1 of the Washington State Constitution, the Executive Department is created. The Constitution provides that the executive department must consist of a Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, Treasurer, Auditor, Attorney General, Superintendent of Public Education, and a Commissioner of Public Lands.

All other aspects of state government have been created through statute.

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

Summary of Bill (Proposed Substitute): The Agency Reallocation and Realignment of Washington Commission (Commission) on restructuring state government is established.

The following individuals are appointed to the Commission:

- Dan Evans;
- Booth Gardner;
- Slade Gorton;
- Sid Snyder;
- John Spellman; and
- Ruth Walsh McIntyre.

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.

The President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives must jointly appoint a member to the Commission to replace any member that resigns from or declines initial appointment.

The Commission must:

- review budget, revenue, and caseload forecasts and estimates over the ensuing six-year period;
- examine current operations and organizations of state government assuming no expansion of current funding sources;
- evaluate operational and organizational restructuring possibilities to find cost savings and efficiencies in order to maintain or enhance governmental functions with fewer resources.

The Commission may make proposals to:

- adopt methods and procedures for reducing expenditures to the lowest amount consistent with efficient performance of essential services, activities, and functions;
- eliminate duplication and overlapping services, activities, and functions;
- consolidate services, activities, and functions of a similar nature;
- abolish services, activities, and functions not necessary to the efficient operation of government;
- eliminate unnecessary state departments and agencies, create necessary new state departments and agencies, reorganize existing state departments and agencies, and transfer functions and responsibilities among state departments and agencies;
- define or redefine the duties and responsibilities of state officers; and
- revise present provisions for continuing or permanent appropriations of state funds of whatever kind for whatever purpose, eliminate any such existing provisions, and adopt new provisions.

The Commission must report its findings and recommendations in the form of proposed legislation, to the 2011 Legislature. The Commission may not issue minority or majority reports.

Any legislation proposed by the Commission must be introduced as a bill in each house of the Legislature and immediately placed on third reading. Each bill must be either approved on final passage or rejected without change or amendment before the full membership of the body.

Documents, materials, and information obtained or produced by the Agency Reallocation and Realignment of Washington Commission are not subject to disclosure under the Public Records Act.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 22, 2010.

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: This is a bill about making government more efficient. Congress faced this same problem with regard to military bases. Congress took the step to create the BRAC (Base Realignment and Closure Commission) as a way to take politics out of the decisionmaking. Today people look back on BRAC as a model of fairness and efficiency. This bill applies the same strategy to Washington State government. There will be no sacred cows, no favored programs that will be spared review.

CON: We are in a period of transition in this country. Some guiding principles we should look to during this difficult time are the separation of powers and adherence to open government. The Legislature should not be able to determine who will be on a commission that will oversee the legislative and executive branches of our state government. There needs to be a better way to go about this process. Any process that allows for an exemption to the Public Records Act and the Open Public Meetings Act is not a good process.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Kastama, prime sponsor.

CON: Arthur West, citizen.