

HOUSE BILL REPORT

EHB 1234

As Passed House:
February 25, 2011

Title: An act relating to law enforcement crime prevention efforts regarding security alarm systems and crime watch programs for residential and commercial locations.

Brief Description: Addressing law enforcement crime prevention efforts regarding security alarm systems and crime watch programs for residential and commercial locations.

Sponsors: Representatives Moscoso, Hope, Klippert, Lytton, Johnson, Rivers, Jinkins, Ladenburg, Ryu, Reykdal, Fitzgibbon and Maxwell.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government & Tribal Affairs: 1/31/11, 2/9/11 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/25/11, 97-0.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill

- Exempts from disclosure personally identifying information collected by law enforcement agencies regarding local security alarm systems programs and vacation crime watch programs.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & TRIBAL AFFAIRS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Hunt, Chair; Appleton, Vice Chair; Taylor, Ranking Minority Member; Overstreet, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Condotta, Darneille, Dunshee, Hurst, McCoy and Miloscia.

Staff: Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

Background:

The Public Records Act (PRA) requires that all state and local government agencies make all public records available for public inspection and copying unless they fall within certain statutory exemptions. The provisions requiring public records disclosure must be interpreted

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liberally and the exemptions narrowly in order to effectuate a general policy favoring disclosure.

Summary of Engrossed Bill:

Personally identifying information regarding local security alarm system programs and vacation crime watch programs collected by law enforcement agencies is exempt from disclosure. However, the exemption does not prohibit the legal owner of a residence or business from accessing information pertinent to his or her residence or business.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs supports the bill. This is a simple bill to effectuate a simple fix. Police keep records that include the names and addresses of homes and businesses that have alarm systems and there have been a few public records requests for this information. Records are also kept on home watch programs. Program participants are asked to fill out forms and include names and addresses, as well as information on when residents will be away from home and who may have a key to their house.

(In support with amendment) The Allied Daily Newspapers support the bill but would like an amendment that would enable them to get general address information that does not identify any particular person, so that information can be provided on the effectiveness of the programs in the various neighborhoods.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Moscoso, prime sponsor; and Jo Arlow, Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs.

(In support with amendment) Rowland Thompson, Allied Daily Newspapers.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.