

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1691

As of March 15, 2011

Title: An act relating to embalmers.

Brief Description: Concerning embalmers.

Sponsors: House Committee on Business & Financial Services (originally sponsored by Representatives Kirby, Anderson, Springer, Eddy, Ryu, Morris and Stanford).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/26/11, 97-0.

Committee Activity: Government Operations, Tribal Relations & Elections: 3/08/11.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, TRIBAL RELATIONS & ELECTIONS

Staff: Diane Smith (786-7410)

Background: Counties are responsible for providing for the disposition of the remains of any indigent person whose body is unclaimed by relatives or a church organization. Remains of persons that will be buried at the public expense are required to be surrendered to a physician or surgeon. These bodies must be used for the advancement of anatomical science. Preference is given to medical schools in this state for their use in the instruction of medical students.

Embalmers are regulated by the Department of Licensing. In order to be licensed, an applicant must complete the required education in mortuary science, complete an embalmer internship, and successfully pass an examination.

Summary of Bill: A public agency required to provide for the disposition of human remains at public expense may surrender the remains to an accredited educational institution offering funeral services and embalming programs. The bodies must be used to train embalming students under the supervision of a licensed embalmer.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The new program at Lake Washington Technical College is the only one in the state that provides a degree that qualifies the student to become licensed to perform embalming services for the public. The minimum number of embalmings necessary for licensure is ten. The College is accredited. Its new health facility has embalming laboratories and appropriate storage facilities. Student fees pay for the cost of cremation of the remains.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Kirby, prime sponsor; Erin Wilcox, Lake Washington Technical College.