

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6047

As of January 17, 2012

Title: An act relating to state library research requests.

Brief Description: Allowing the state library to recover costs associated with research requests from persons who are not Washington residents.

Sponsors: Senators Chase, Swecker, Honeyford, Fraser, Shin, Parlette and Tom; by request of Secretary of State.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations, Tribal Relations & Elections: 1/12/12.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, TRIBAL RELATIONS & ELECTIONS

Staff: Karen Epps (786-7424)

Background: The Act to establish the territorial government of Washington provided for the establishment of a territorial library; the state library was created shortly after statehood. The library's primary mission is to serve the government's information needs. In 2002 the state library was transferred to the Office of the Secretary of State (SEC).

The state librarian manages and administers the state library functions, including:

- acquiring library materials, equipment, and supplies and assisting the Legislature, state agencies, and other libraries in the cost-effective purchase of information resources;
- providing advisory services to state agencies regarding information needs and collecting and distributing copies of state publications;
- promoting and facilitating electronic access to public information and services;
- serving as an interlibrary loan, information, reference, and referral resource for all libraries in the state and as the depository for newspapers published in the state;
- maintaining a library to effectively provide library and information services to the Legislature, state officials, and state employees;
- providing for library and information services to persons throughout the state who are blind or physically handicapped and to residents and staff of state-supported residential institutions; and

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- entering into agreements to implement the mission, goals, and objectives of the library; employing and terminating personnel; and providing for the sale of library material.

Summary of Bill: The state librarian is responsible and accountable for charging a fee to recover the costs of fulfilling the research request made by a someone who is not a resident of Washington.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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: The state library is a research library. The library has four individuals whose responsibility is to respond to research requests. The library handled over 11,000 requests. Research requests include requests on Washington history, politics, governance, natural resources, and culture. Many requests for family research come from customers who reside outside the state. The proposed legislation will do two things: allow the library to recover costs for requests that come from non-taxpayers, and help the library manage the workload. There is a possibility that charging to recover the costs will reduce the number of requests. The state library currently has a backlog of four to six weeks and the thought is that this will help the library bring the backlog up to two to four weeks. SEC has the capacity in-house to develop a system to assess the person's state of residence and collect the payment for service.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Chase, prime sponsor; Rand Simmons, State Librarian, SEC.