

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5055

As of January 25, 2013

Title: An act relating to the state archivist.

Brief Description: Regarding the state archivist.

Sponsors: Senator Honeyford.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Governmental Operations: 1/24/13.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

Staff: Samuel Brown (786-7470)

Background: Under current Washington law, all public records must be and remain the property of the state of Washington. The Division of Archives and Records Management in the Office of the Secretary of State is administered by the State Archivist. The State Archivist has a variety of duties, including:

- managing the state archives;
- cataloging and arranging the retention of all state public records;
- ensuring the maintenance and security of all state public records;
- operating a records center and a microfilming bureau;
- directly supervising the destruction of public records that are authorized to be destroyed;
- prescribing records management procedures for state agencies; and
- training state and local agency officials in proper records management practices.

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

Summary of Bill (Proposed Substitute): The State Archivist must meet certain qualifications:

- have a master's degree in history, government, political science, or business administration, or be a certified archivist; and
- have five years of experience as an archivist.

The duties and responsibilities of the State Archivist are expanded. The State Archivist must:

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- provide consultant services for archival programs and training for state and local records coordinators;
- supervise the operation of regional branches and digital archives;
- demand turnover of original state or local government records illegally possessed by any person, organization, or entity;
- coordinate with other government entities and consult on public records; and
- make recommendations for improvements to laws, rules, policies, and procedures on behalf of the division of archives and records management and state and local government agencies and officials.

The state microfilming bureau is now an imaging services bureau to be operated by the State Archivist and provides digital imaging services at cost.

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: Some of the parts of the statute are outdated. Other tweaks to the State Archivist's responsibilities reflect what the archivist already does. This is important for us to maintain our historical records. A librarian or a lawyer could be added as qualifications as well. It was surprising to learn there are no minimal qualifications to be state archivist. That goes back to when professionalism was not as widespread as it is today. Many other states have qualifications. It is important that the person have the trust of the people. Our digital archives are looked upon as number one in the country.

CON: The specific job qualifications do not need to be placed in statute. That is not done for many other positions in state government. This should be left to the Secretary of State's discretion. Having a particular degree does not necessarily mean that a person has the skills to administer a division. You would not want the House imposing specific job requirements for the Secretary of the Senate.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Honeyford, prime sponsor; Jerry Handfield, citizen.

CON: Katie Blinn, Office of the Secretary of State.