

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5217

As of February 11, 2013

Title: An act relating to eliminating the Washington state quality award program.

Brief Description: Eliminating the Washington state quality award program.

Sponsors: Senator Schoesler; by request of Office of Financial Management.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Governmental Operations: 2/07/13.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

Staff: Sam Thompson (786-7413)

Background: In 1994, the Washington State Quality Award (WSQA) Council was established as a private, nonprofit corporation to recognize, through awards, excellence in performance in the private sector, and potentially to provide education and training. Later, state agencies and certain local government and other entities providing affordable housing were required to periodically apply to the council or a similar organization for an independent assessment of quality management, accountability, and performance. Intended to recognize best practices and identify opportunities for improvement, the assessment includes evaluating leadership, strategic planning, customer focus, employee management, and other matters.

Each state agency must also develop and implement a quality management, accountability, and performance system to improve public services.

Summary of Bill: Provisions requiring state agencies and certain local government and other entities providing affordable housing to apply to the WSQA program for an assessment of quality management, accountability, and performance are repealed or deleted. The requirement that each state agency develop and implement a quality management, accountability, and performance system is limited to apply only to state agencies with 100 or more full-time equivalent employees.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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.

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: There are a variety of means to review performance quality. Agencies need more flexibility in conducting quality review. Small agencies with 100 or fewer employees and low-income housing organizations operating with lean budgets need relief from the current mandate. Quality review is a time-consuming process, and costs may not be reimbursed. Many organizations would not benefit from this review. This bill raises legitimate policy questions and savings.

CON: The quality award program, currently the only independent assessment by a professional organization, asks tough questions about agency performance, necessary for accountability. Reviews cost agencies only \$2,000 to \$3,000 per review, and enable them to save money in the long run by fixing identified problems. The 2005 legislation establishing the current mandate, which took effect in 2008, had bipartisan support. The requirement to comply with the mandate has been called into question because of lack of funding.

OTHER: There are misconceptions about quality award programs. They have greatly benefitted public agencies in the United States by enabling them to improve performance. The review program is about quality management, and is not prescriptive. The current mandate should be retained.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Schoesler, prime sponsor; Julie Murray, Office of Financial Management.

CON: Mark Miloscia, citizen.

OTHER: Carol Knight-Wallace, Bruce Requa, WSQA.