S-3804.1

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**SENATE BILL 6295**

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**State of Washington 64th Legislature 2016 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Hasegawa and McCoy

AN ACT Relating to clarifying the venue in which coroner's inquests are to be convened and payment of related costs; and amending RCW 36.24.020.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

**Sec.**  RCW 36.24.020 and 2009 c 549 s 4032 are each amended to read as follows:

Any coroner, in his or her discretion, may hold an inquest if the coroner suspects that the death of a person was unnatural, or violent, or resulted from unlawful means, or from suspicious circumstances, or was of such a nature as to indicate the possibility of death by the hand of the deceased or through the instrumentality of some other person: PROVIDED, That, except under suspicious circumstances, no inquest shall be held following a traffic death.

The coroner in the county where an inquest is to be convened pursuant to this chapter shall notify the superior court to provide persons to serve as a jury of inquest to hear all the evidence concerning the death and to inquire into and render a true verdict on the cause of death. Jurors shall be selected and summoned in the same manner and shall have the same qualifications as specified in chapter 2.36 RCW.

At the coroner's request, the superior court shall provide a courtroom in which the inquest may be convened, a bailiff, reporter, and any security deemed reasonably necessary by the coroner. The inquest must take place on a date mutually agreed upon by the coroner and the superior court, within one year of the date the coroner's request to the court was made. If the superior court cannot accommodate the inquest for good cause shown, the court must designate an alternative venue for the inquest in an adjoining county.

The prosecuting attorney having jurisdiction shall be notified in advance of any such inquest to be held, and at his or her discretion may be present at and assist the coroner in the conduct of the same. The coroner may adjourn the inquest from time to time as he or she may deem necessary.

The costs of inquests, including any costs incurred by the superior court, shall be borne by the county in which the inquest is held.

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