

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2775

As Reported by House Committee On:
Public Safety

Title: An act relating to coroners and medical examiners regarding death investigations.

Brief Description: Concerning coroners and medical examiners regarding death investigations.

Sponsors: Representatives Klippert, Appleton, Haler, Hayes and Dent.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Public Safety: 1/26/16 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Adds a medical examiner as an additional person (in addition to the coroner) that a person can notify when he or she knows of the existence and location of human remains.
- Substitutes the term "body of a deceased person" for "human remains" thus making it illegal to remove or conceal human remains.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Goodman, Chair; Orwall, Vice Chair; Klippert, Ranking Minority Member; Hayes, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appleton, Griffey, Moscoso, Pettigrew and Wilson.

Staff: Yvonne Walker (786-7841).

Background:

It is the duty of every person who knows of the existence and location of a dead body to notify the coroner in the most expeditious manner possible, unless such person has good reason to believe that such notice has already been given. Any person who fails to give notice to the coroner is guilty of a misdemeanor offense.

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.

A person is guilty of a gross misdemeanor offense, if not authorized by the coroner, the person removes or conceals or aids in the removal or concealment of the body of a deceased person:

- not claimed by a relative or friend;
- who came to their death by reason of violence or unnatural causes; or
- where there exists reasonable grounds that the death of the person was caused by unlawful means at the hands of another.

This offense is punishable by a fine of not more than \$1,000, imprisonment of up to 364 days in jail, or both imprisonment and a fine.

A misdemeanor offense is punishable by a sentence of up to 90 days in jail, or a maximum fine of \$1,000, or both imprisonment and a fine. A gross misdemeanor offense is punishable by a sentence of up to 364 days in jail or a maximum fine of \$5,000, or both imprisonment and a fine.

"Human remains" means the body of a deceased person which includes the body in any stage of decomposition, and includes cremated human remains.

Summary of Bill:

A medical examiner is added as an additional person (in addition to the coroner) that a person can notify when he or she knows of the existence and location of human remains.

The term "body of a deceased person" is substituted for "human remains" thus making it a crime to remove or conceal human remains.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Preliminary fiscal note available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This is a bill that was heard last week. It was just reintroduced with another sponsor.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Klippert, prime sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: Michael Shaw, Washington Association of County Officials.