
Judiciary Committee

SB 6262

Title: An act relating to a coroner's warrant authority.

Brief Description: Concerning a coroner's warrant authority.

Sponsors: Senators O'Ban, Pedersen and Padden.

| Brief Summary of Bill |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Repeals the warrant authority of coroners, and instead requires coroners to deliver the findings of the inquest jury and associated information to the prosecuting attorney in applicable cases. |

Hearing Date: 2/23/16

Staff: Omeara Harrington (786-7136).

Background:

Any coroner, at his or her discretion, may hold an inquest if the coroner suspects that the death of a person was unnatural, violent, resulted from unlawful means, resulted from suspicious circumstances, or was a suicide or homicide. The prosecuting attorney having jurisdiction in the county in which the inquest is held may be present and assist the coroner.

Upon calling an inquest, the coroner must notify the superior court to provide persons to serve as an inquest jury. The inquest jury is tasked with hearing evidence concerning the death and rendering a true verdict on the cause of death. The jury must additionally set forth the identity of the person killed, if known, when and where the death occurred, and the means of death. If the jury determines that the person was killed or that his or her death was occasioned by criminal means, the jury must also set forth the identity of the guilty person, if known.

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.

At the conclusion of an inquisition in which it is determined that the deceased person was killed, the coroner must issue a warrant for the responsible party's arrest, if the responsible party's identity is ascertained and he or she is at large.

Summary of Bill:

The authority and requirement for a coroner to issue an arrest warrant for a person determined by an inquest jury to be responsible for a death is repealed. Following an inquest in which a person is determined to have killed another person, and is at large, the coroner must deliver the findings of the inquest jury and all documents, testimony, and records associated with the inquest to the prosecuting attorney of the county where the inquest was held.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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