

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESSB 5267

As Amended by House, April 15, 2015

Title: An act relating to prerecorded video testimony and written testimony on pending legislation.

Brief Description: Ordering development of processes to allow prerecorded video testimony and written testimony on pending legislation.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Government Operations & Security (originally sponsored by Senators Habib, Roach, Liias, Pearson, Keiser, Mullet and Chase; by request of Secretary of State).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Security (Note: Senate Resolution 8609 adopted January 27, 2015, renamed the Committee on Government Operations & State Security to Committee on Government Operations & Security): 1/19/15, 1/27/15 [DPS].
Passed Senate: 2/13/15, 46-0.
Passed House: 4/15/15, 96-2.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & SECURITY

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5267 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Roach, Chair; Pearson, Vice Chair; Liias, Ranking Minority Member; Habib and McCoy.

Staff: Karen Epps (786-7424)

Background: The Secretary of the Senate and Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives oversee a variety of administrative functions provided to legislators and staff in support of the Legislature's constitutional mission. In addition to the Senate and the House of Representatives, the legislative branch of state government consists of several statutory legislative agencies. The legislative agencies include the following:

- Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee – conducts performance audits, program evaluations, special studies, and program sunset reviews;
- Statute Law Committee – publishes the Revised Code of Washington and the Washington Administrative Code; provides a central bill-drafting service;

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- Joint Transportation Committee – serves as the joint fact-finding committee on transportation issues;
- Office of the State Actuary – provides actuarial services relating to state retirement systems and other programs;
- Joint Legislative Systems Committee – administers legislative information processing and communications systems;
- Legislative Support Services – provides administrative and support services, including facility management, production and audio-visual services, information distribution, and other administrative and support services; and
- Legislative Evaluation and Accountability Program Committee – provides information and technology with respect to budgets and revenue.

The Senate, the House, and legislative agencies each employ professional and administrative support staff.

Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill: The Legislature and legislative agencies through the Joint Legislative Systems Committee must develop processes for both mobile devices and computers to allow the public to provide testimony on pending legislation through prerecorded videos and written statements. The Joint Legislative Systems Committee may set up parameters around the length of prerecorded videos and written statements. The Joint Legislative Systems Committee must set up parameters around whether some prerecorded videos and written statements contain inappropriate content and should not be made available to legislators unless requested by a legislator. Submitted testimony must be made available to members of the Legislature in a timely fashion. The definition of legislative record is amended to include prerecorded video testimony and written testimony.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill: PRO: This bill addresses an issue that exists at the Legislature in that it is incredibly difficult for nearly all Washingtonians to come before the Legislature and have their perspective heard. It may be difficult for any number of reasons, including that they cannot drive, they cannot miss work, or they live far away. People may spend up to eight hours to come to the Legislature to speak for three minutes. This bill would allow someone to record or write testimony and submit it to the committee. Legislators will have the opportunity to view video testimony and read written testimony outside of the committee hearing time, but it will be part of the legislative record. This is not an attempt by the executive branch to infringe on the rules or traditions of the Legislature but this bill is designed to add more civic engagement to the legislative process for our citizens. This bill is designed to make it easier for people to engage in testimony to the Legislature.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Habib, prime sponsor; Kim Wyman, Secretary of State.

House Amendment(s): Establishes a two-year pilot project in the Senate to expand the e-comment system to allow the public to provide commentary on pending legislation through prerecorded videos. States the Legislature's commitment to civic engagement and public participation in the legislative process. Changes the name of the act to the "Accessible Legislative Commentary Act."