

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5532

As Passed Senate, March 3, 2015

Title: An act relating to Washington's gift of life award.

Brief Description: Modifying certain Washington gift of life award provisions.

Sponsors: Senators Rolfes, Bailey and Kohl-Welles.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Security: 2/02/15, 2/10/15 [DP].
Passed Senate: 3/03/15, 48-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & SECURITY

Majority Report: Do pass.

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

Staff: Karen Epps (786-7424)

Background: The Washington Gift of Life award was established in 1998 to recognize the special kindness of those who donate their organs. An organ procurement organization may nominate six individuals or persons to represent all those who have donated organs. Only one award may be presented to the family of an organ donor. The Governor's office presents the awards on an annual basis in coordination with the organ procurement organization. The Washington Gift of Life award consists of the seal of Washington and is inscribed with the words: "For the greatest act of kindness in donating organs to enhance the lives of others."

Summary of Bill: The Governor's office must annually present the Washington Gift of Life award to families of organ donors. Organ procurement organizations may nominate individuals to represent all those who have donated organs during the previous calendar year. The Governor's office must present the awards on an annual basis to each eligible organ donor's family. Organ procurement organizations must seek permission from the families of organ donors selected to receive the Gift of Life award so that the name of the organ donors may be released to the Governor's office for printing of a Gift of Life Certificate and be used at Gift of Life ceremonies and events. The Washington Gift of Life award is inscribed with the words: "For the greatest act of kindness in donating organs to save the lives of others."

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.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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: The original Gift of Life award was conceived in 1998. This bill is almost a housekeeping bill. Currently, six families are honored with the Gift of Life award each year. In any given year, there are more than six families who deserve recognition. This bill removes that limitation. The federal government regulates organ donation so as to ensure that it is not a competitive market. There are 123,000 people waiting on the organ donor list nationally. Organ donation truly is a life-saving gift. Last year, 197 people gave the gift of life in Washington State. If there is any increased cost to the state, Life Center NW would be willing to pay for those costs. There have been situations where particular families were not chosen and they have felt excluded from what is a really special day. A certificate with the seal of Washington is a proper and good gift to these families whose loved ones have given the ultimate gift.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Rolfes, prime sponsor; Vicki Christophersen, Andrew Capperault, Life Center NW.