

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 6295

C 13 L 16
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Clarifying the venue in which coroner's inquests are to be convened and payment of related costs.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Law & Justice (originally sponsored by Senators Hasegawa and McCoy).

Senate Committee on Law & Justice
House Committee on Judiciary

Background: Under current law, coroners may convene an inquest hearing when the coroner suspects a death occurs through unlawful, violent, or suspicious circumstances. The superior courts provide persons from the jury pool to serve on the inquest jury. The inquest jury renders a verdict on the likely causes and circumstances of a death, but the verdict does not assign culpability for a death. Coroner's inquests happen infrequently. Some jurisdictions may not have a process for scheduling a time and place for the inquest and paying the associated costs.

Summary: A coroner holding an inquest requests the superior court to provide a courtroom, court personnel, and the inquest jury panel. The inquest date is set by mutual agreement between the coroner and the superior court. The inquest date must be no later than eighteen months after the coroner's request. If no courtroom is available, the superior court may designate a comparable location in the county. If no location in the county is available, the superior court must certify facility unavailability. The inquest must be transferred to another county within 100 miles if no in-county facility is available. The county transferring the inquest will pay the costs to the county receiving the transfer.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	45	0
House	75	22

Effective: June 9, 2016

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.