

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1764

As Reported by House Committee On: Local Government

Title: An act relating to adjusting monetary thresholds for found property.

Brief Description: Adjusting monetary thresholds for found property.

Sponsors: Representatives Chambers, Goodman, Mosbrucker, Corry, Gildon, Klippert, DeBolt, Fey, Van Werven, MacEwen, Riccelli, McCaslin and Young.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Local Government: 2/15/19, 2/19/19 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Changes the monetary threshold related to found property from \$25 to \$100 or less adjusted for inflation.
- Includes a provision for monetary adjustments, adjusted for inflation, to be made every five years.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Pollet, Chair; Peterson, Vice Chair; Kraft, Ranking Minority Member; Griffey, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appleton, Goehner and Senn.

Staff: Robbi Kesler (786-7153).

Background:

Any person who, as a private citizen, finds property whose owner is unknown and who wishes to claim the property, must first report the find to the chief law enforcement officer of the governmental entity that has jurisdiction over where the property was found. For property other than cash, the finder must have the property appraised. If the property is valued at \$25 or less, the finder is allowed to keep the property.

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.

If the property value exceeds \$25, the law enforcement entity may request the finder to surrender the property for 60 days while steps are taken to locate the owner, including publication in a newspaper for two weeks, or if the value of the property is less than the cost of publishing notice, the notice may be posted in other media or formats that do not incur an expense. Once the requirements have been met and at least 60 days have passed, the found property may be released to the finder. The finder must pay a \$10 fee, plus the cost of publishing notice, to the treasurer of the governmental entity handling the found property. If the appraised value of the property is less than the cost of publication of notice of the finding, the finder is not required to pay a fee.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The bill changes the monetary threshold related to appraisal requirement, surrender, and notification of found property from \$25 to \$100 or less adjusted for inflation.

The Office of Financial Management (OFM) is required to adjust the threshold for inflation every five years, beginning July 1, 2025, based upon the Seattle consumer price index. During that time period, the OFM is required to notify the Office of the Code Reviser at least one month prior to when the new monetary threshold is to take effect. The dollar threshold must be rounded up to the nearest dollar.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill requires the dollar threshold, as adjusted for inflation, to be rounded up to the nearest dollar.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The original statute dates back to 1979 and has not been updated. As a result, cities are required to store and manage inventory for many small value items. This bill would give relief to local governments which incur expenses for storage and staff time. The required storage process is expensive and time consuming for low-value items and most of the time, the found property is an item that has been discarded and the finder has no intention of claiming it.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Chambers, prime sponsor; Dave McDonald, City of Puyallup; Tom Swanson, City of Puyallup; and James McMahan, Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.