

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SHB 1764

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As of March 14, 2019

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

**Brief Description:** Adjusting monetary thresholds for found property.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Local Government (originally sponsored by Representatives Chambers, Goodman, Mosbrucker, Corry, Gildon, Klippert, DeBolt, Fey, Van Werven, MacEwen, Riccelli, McCaslin and Young).

**Brief History:** Passed House: 3/04/19, 95-1.

**Committee Activity:** Local Government: 3/14/19.

### Brief Summary of Bill

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

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## SENATE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

**Staff:** Bonnie Kim (786-7316)

**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. 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.

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*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.*

**Summary of Bill:** The monetary threshold related to the appraisal, surrender, or notification of found property is increased from \$25 to \$100 or less, adjusted for inflation by the Office of Financial Management (OFM) every five years beginning July 1, 2025. The inflation adjustment is based on the Seattle consumer price index. OFM must notify the Office of the Code Reviser at least one month before a new monetary threshold is to take effect.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: This statute was written decades ago and the monetary threshold has never been adjusted. Cities in my district have found they are spending \$10,000 in storage fees to store found property that is never claimed. This bill would save our police department money by saving us from having to pick up found property valued less than \$100 and then to store these items for 60 days. This bill would allow finders to keep these items or us to donate them right away. Our city has focused on performance improvement and creating greater efficiencies in our local government. One of our pilot programs was to lower the amount of money we are spending on storing evidence.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Representative Kelly Chambers, Prime Sponsor; Tom Swanson, Deputy Mayor, City of Puyallup; Dave McDonald, Deputy Chief, City of Puyallup Police Department.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.