

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SB 5758

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**As Reported By House Committee On:**  
Corrections

**Title:** An act relating to inmate work programs.

**Brief Description:** Removing statutory restrictions on class II inmate work programs.

**Sponsors:** Senators Pelz, Hargrove and Long.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Corrections: 3/28/95, 3/29/95 [DP].

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Blanton, Vice Chairman; Sherstad, Vice Chairman; Tokuda, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Cole; Dickerson; Koster; K. Schmidt and Schoesler.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Quall, Ranking Minority Member; and Radcliff.

**Staff:** Antonio Sanchez (786-7383).

**Background:** The Department of Corrections (DOC) Division of Correctional Industries is required to develop and implement work programs that provide jobs, work experience and training to inmates, and reduce a portion of the financial burden of incarceration. The department operates five classes of work programs. Class II Industries is state-owned and managed directly by DOC to reduce the costs of goods and services for tax supported agencies and for nonprofit corporations. Class II Correctional Industries produce such goods as license plates, milk and milk products, and furniture. In 1993, the law was changed to require state agencies and the Legislature to purchase goods and services from DOC Correctional II programs if the goods and services would otherwise be purchased from outside the state.

Prior to the change in the law in 1993, installation of some of the goods purchased from out-of-state firms was subcontracted to in-state firms. Since these contracts are now awarded to Correctional Industries, the installation work is done by inmates who are supervised by DOC employees. The Department of Corrections believes that the

subcontracting of the work would thus violate the general state prohibition on contracting-out. This has prevented some in-state businesses from competing with Correctional Industries for public contracts.

**Summary of Bill:** The current statutory provision prohibiting the contracting out of work performed by classified employees is inapplicable to contracts with Washington State businesses entered into by the Department of Corrections through Class II prison industries.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Testimony For:** This measure will allow the Department of Corrections greater flexibility in servicing their customers while also stimulating private sector relations. The Department of Corrections, however, is neutral on the bill.

**Testimony Against:** State workers could be displaced by allowing contracting with the private sector.

**Testified:** Eugene St. John, WPEA (con); and Janeen Wadsworth, Correctional Industries.