

5635

Sponsor(s): Senators Prentice, Fairley, Kline, Kohl-Welles, Shin, Thibaudeau, Regala, Franklin and Keiser

Brief Description: Creating a task force to study the death penalty.

**SB 5635 - DIGEST**

Provides that, until July 1, 2005, the sentence of death for anyone sentenced under RCW 10.95.030(2) shall be stayed.

Creates a death penalty task force for the purpose of conducting a review of the existing statutes and court rules to determine the following: (1) The adequacy of the counsel and resources provided defendants in capital offense cases;

(2) The uniformity of decision making by prosecuting attorneys in terms of charging defendants with aggravated first degree murder and the criteria in such decisions;

(3) The impact of race, ethnicity, gender, and economic status on the likelihood of a defendant being charged with aggravated first degree murder; and

(4) Whether there are revisions to existing statutes and court rules which, if implemented, would decrease the likelihood of an inappropriate imposition of the death penalty.

Directs the task force to make a report, together with any recommendations, to the legislature, governor, and supreme court not later than January 1, 2005.

Appropriates the sum of fifty thousand dollars, or as much thereof as may be necessary, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2004, from the general fund to the office of the administrator for the courts for the purposes of providing staffing and support to the death penalty task force.