

FINAL BILL REPORT

HB 1181

C 200 L 07

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Modifying the powers and funding of the forensic investigations council.

Sponsors: By Representatives Ericks, O'Brien, Lovick, Ormsby, McDonald, Haler and Wallace.

House Committee on Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness

House Committee on Finance

Senate Committee on Judiciary

Background:

Washington State Forensic Investigations Council.

The Washington State Forensic Investigations Council (Council) is a 12-member committee appointed by the Governor to oversee death investigations as part of the state's criminal justice system. The Council authorizes expenditures from the Council's Death Investigations Account for the purpose of assisting local jurisdictions in the investigation of multiple deaths involving unanticipated, extraordinary, and catastrophic events, or involving multiple jurisdictions. The Council also oversees the Washington State Patrol Bureau of Forensic Laboratory Services (Bureau) and prepares and approves the Bureau's budget prior to submission to the Office of Financial Management.

The Bureau provides a wide range of forensic science expertise to city, county, and state law enforcement officers, assisting agencies at crime scenes, preparing evidence for trial, and providing expert testimony. The Bureau coordinates the efforts of the State's Breath Alcohol Test Program, Drug Evaluation and Classification Program, six crime laboratories, the Latent Print Laboratory, and the State Toxicology Laboratory.

Vital Records.

The Department of Health's (DOH) Center for Health Statistics (CHS) has maintained the state's system of vital records and statistics since 1907. The term "vital record" includes all records of: birth certificates, death certificates, fetal certificates, marriage certificates, dissolutions (divorce certificates), annulments, and legal separations. The DOH is required to charge a \$17 fee for certified copies of vital records and \$8 for a search of files when no copy is made. Certified copies of vital records may be obtained from the CHS or local health jurisdictions.

A portion of each fee collected is paid to the DOH for the purpose of maintaining the state vital records system. In addition, \$5 of each current fee imposed is dedicated to the Death Investigations Account for the purpose of funding the state toxicology laboratory, county autopsy costs, and the state forensic investigations council, among other things.

Summary:

Washington State Forensic Investigations Council.

The Council is authorized to spend a maximum of \$25,000 per biennium from the Death Investigations Account for the purpose of assisting local jurisdictions in need of securing forensic anthropology services or other testing to determine the identity of human remains. The Council must adopt rules for the purpose of authorizing this expenditure.

Vital Records.

The state and local fee for all certified copies of vital records is increased to \$20. The portion of the fee dedicated to the Death Investigations Account is increased to \$8 of each fee imposed for the issuance of a certified copy of a vital record.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	83	13
Senate	46	1

Effective: July 22, 2007