

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESSB 5668

As Reported By House Committee On:

Education

Title: An act relating to criminal records checks for school employees and volunteers.

Brief Description: Regarding criminal records checks for volunteers who have regularly scheduled unsupervised access to children.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Senators West, T. Sheldon, Patterson, Heavey, Snyder, Oke, Costa and Rasmussen).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 3/25/99, 3/29/99 [DP].

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill

- Allows school volunteers to have background/record checks done previously by other organizations forwarded to schools.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 14 members: Representatives Quall, Democratic Co-Chair; Talcott, Republican Co-Chair; Haigh, Democratic Vice Chair; Schindler, Republican Vice Chair; Carlson; Cox; Keiser; Rockefeller; Santos; D. Schmidt; Schual-Berke; Stensen; Sump and Wensman.

Staff: Charlie Gavigan (786-7340).

Background: Several state laws permit the request of in-state criminal record information. Unless the request is for a nonprofit organization or for criminal justice purposes, there is a fee. Health care facilities have specific authority to share copies of completed in-state criminal background check information, in certain circumstances.

Summary of Bill: Businesses, schools, organizations, and agencies may share an individual's criminal records check information with school districts, if the individual is a volunteer with the school district and the individual permits the sharing of information.

If a school volunteer tells a school he or she has undergone a records check in the past two years, then the school may ask the volunteer to furnish the school with the record check information or to sign a release to the business, school, organization, or agency that sought the information. Once the school requests the information from the business, school, organization, or agency, it must be furnished to the school. The school must also require the volunteer to sign a statement indicating that there has been no conviction since the check was made. Those who share the information in accordance with this act have immunity from liability for sharing the information.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Some organizations require a record check to participate in their program and many school districts require a record check to volunteer in the schools. This bill allows the school district to obtain a record check already done by another organization, with the volunteers permission, lowering costs and reducing inconveniences.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Colleen Bellows and Walter Corwin, Big Brothers Big Sisters; Nancy MacDonald, Advocacy Rights of Citizens; and Esther Moloney, King County Coalition of Parents.