

SENATE BILL REPORT

SCR 8404

As of February 7, 2005

Brief Description: Resolving to create a commission on the evaluation of the legislature.

Sponsors: Senators Kohl-Welles, Brown, Finkbeiner, Kastama and Jacobsen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Elections: 2/8/05.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

Staff: Diane Smith (786-7410)

Background: Questions arise as to whether the Washington State legislature is structurally, functionally, operationally, and procedurally satisfactory for resolving today's complex and divisive issues. Demands on legislators' time have expanded significantly. Legislators' regard for their own legislature tend to be without regard for how the Washington State legislature compares with other state legislatures.

Summary of Bill: A 15 member commission is appointed by the legislature. Four members are Senators appointed by the Senate. Four members are representative appointed by the House of Representatives. Seven members, appointed by the legislative members, are citizens with the philosophical perspective on the proper roles of government, society, and the individual. A simple majority constitutes a quorum.

The commission is established to evaluate the legislature's decision making capabilities based on five categories. These categories are: structure and function; accountability; informedness; independence; and representativeness.

The commission reports its finding and recommendations to the legislature by December 1, 2006. The commission terminates on December 31, 2006.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 7, 2005.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: Yes.