

4 address this situation and provide appropriate protection so citizens can feel secure in reporting possible violations of the law to regulatory agencies. The agency then can verify the facts and take appropriate action.

Section 3 was added to Substitute House Bill No. 1254 late in the session and was not subject to thorough legislative discussion and standing committee review. It provides that if an agency fails to respond to a complaint regarding a matter of concern to the agency, the person filing the complaint would be immune from civil liability on claims arising from the communication of the complaint.

I understand that the intent of this section is to ensure that good faith citizen complaints are acted upon by governmental agencies by providing immunity from suit to people who may choose to go public with their concerns. That is an admirable purpose which I support. However, I am concerned that the language used in this section could be interpreted to mean that immunity would be conferred even when statements are made that go beyond the original communication to the agency, such as inferences made about the character of an individual. These claims may arise from the communication and therefore be subject to the immunity provisions. That broadened immunity from civil action is more than what is needed in these instances.

In addition, under section 3, if an agency failed to reasonably respond to a complaint, the complainant would be granted immunity to communicate to other persons information about a private individual that was actually false and damaging to the individual's reputation, as long as the complainant claimed he reasonably believed the information was true. Unfortunately, proving or in this case disproving, the complainant's state of mind is not easy. The injured individual would be precluded from taking action against the person who disseminated the false information.

Also, section 3 fails to indicate what is meant by "if an agency failed to reasonably respond to a complaint". Citizens often expect immediate responses to their complaints regardless of the complexity of the issue or the capacity of the agency to respond. The Legislature should discuss whether this kind of immunity to make false charges is good public policy or if additional safeguards or standards should be included before this provision becomes law.

With the exception of section 3, Substitute House Bill No. 1254 is approved."

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## CHAPTER 235

[House Bill No. 1189]

### KOREAN CONFLICT MEMORIAL

AN ACT Relating to a veterans' memorial; adding new sections to chapter 40.14 RCW; and making an appropriation.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Washington:

**NEW SECTION.** Sec. 1. A new section is added to chapter 40.14 RCW to read as follows:

The director of the department of veterans affairs shall coordinate the design, construction, and placement of a memorial within the state capitol grounds honoring Washington state residents who died or are "missing-in-action" in the Korean conflict.

**NEW SECTION.** Sec. 2. A new section is added to chapter 40.14 RCW to read as follows:

The director of the department of veterans affairs or the director's designee shall chair an advisory committee composed of seven members to include the director of the department of veterans affairs or the director's

designee, the secretary of state or the secretary's designee, the director of the department of general administration or the director's designee, and two members who are representatives of state veterans' organizations and who served in the Korean conflict, one appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives and one appointed by the president of the senate. In addition, two members who served in the Korean conflict will be appointed by the director of the department of veterans affairs. The advisory committee and the state capitol committee shall approve the design and placement of the memorial before construction begins.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 3. The sum of twenty-five thousand dollars, or so much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for the biennium ending June 30, 1991, from the general fund to the department of veteran affairs to carry out the purposes of this act.

Passed the House April 17, 1989.

Passed the Senate March 29, 1989.

Approved by the Governor May 5, 1989.

Filed in Office of Secretary of State May 5, 1989.

## CHAPTER 236

[House Bill No. 2129]

### CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY ENCOURAGED

AN ACT Relating to diverse cultures and languages; and creating new sections.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Washington:

NEW SECTION. Sec. 1. The legislature finds that:

(1) Diverse ethnic and linguistic communities have contributed to the social and economic prosperity of Washington state;

(2) It is the welcomed responsibility and opportunity of this state to respect and facilitate the efforts of all cultural, ethnic, and linguistic segments of the population to become full participants in Washington communities;

(3) This state's economic well-being depends heavily on foreign trade and international exchange and more than one out of six jobs is directly linked to foreign trade and international exchange;

(4) If Washington is to prosper in foreign trade and international exchange, it must have citizens that are multilingual and multicultural;

(5) While recognizing the value of a multilingual background, the state also encourages all citizens to become proficient in English to facilitate full participation of all groups into society and to promote cross-communication between multilingual groups; and

(6) The multilingual nature of communication that currently exists in this state should be promoted to build trust and understanding among all of its citizens.