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**SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6295**

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**State of Washington**

**64th Legislature**

**2016 Regular Session**

**By** Senate Law & Justice (originally sponsored by Senators Hasegawa and McCoy)

READ FIRST TIME 02/05/16.

1       AN ACT Relating to clarifying the venue in which coroner's  
2 inquests are to be convened and payment of related costs; and  
3 amending RCW 36.24.020.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5       **Sec. 1.** RCW 36.24.020 and 2009 c 549 s 4032 are each amended to  
6 read as follows:

7       Any coroner, in his or her discretion, may hold an inquest if the  
8 coroner suspects that the death of a person was unnatural, or  
9 violent, or resulted from unlawful means, or from suspicious  
10 circumstances, or was of such a nature as to indicate the possibility  
11 of death by the hand of the deceased or through the instrumentality  
12 of some other person: PROVIDED, That, except under suspicious  
13 circumstances, no inquest shall be held following a traffic death.

14       The coroner in the county where an inquest is to be convened  
15 pursuant to this chapter shall notify the superior court to provide  
16 persons to serve as a jury of inquest to hear all the evidence  
17 concerning the death and to inquire into and render a true verdict on  
18 the cause of death. Jurors shall be selected and summoned in the same  
19 manner and shall have the same qualifications as specified in chapter  
20 2.36 RCW.

1 At the coroner's request, the superior court shall schedule a  
2 courtroom in which the inquest may be convened, a bailiff, reporter,  
3 and any security deemed reasonably necessary by the coroner. The  
4 coroner and the superior court shall set an inquest date by mutual  
5 agreement. The inquest shall take place within eighteen months of the  
6 coroner's request to the court. If the superior court cannot  
7 accommodate the inquest for good cause shown, the court may designate  
8 a comparable public venue for the inquest in the county.

9 If the superior court is unable to provide a courtroom or  
10 comparable public venue, it shall certify courtroom unavailability in  
11 writing within sixty days of the coroner's request and the inquest  
12 shall be scheduled and transferred to another county within one  
13 hundred miles of the requesting county.

14 The prosecuting attorney having jurisdiction shall be notified in  
15 advance of any such inquest to be held, and at his or her discretion  
16 may be present at and assist the coroner in the conduct of the same.  
17 The coroner may adjourn the inquest from time to time as he or she  
18 may deem necessary.

19 The costs of inquests, including any costs incurred by the  
20 superior court, shall be borne by the county in which the inquest is  
21 ((held)) requested. When an inquest is transferred to another county  
22 due to unavailability of a courtroom, the county from which such  
23 inquest is transferred shall pay the county in which the inquest is  
24 held all costs accrued for per diem and mileage for jurors and  
25 witnesses and all other costs properly charged to the transferring  
26 county.

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