

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5131

As Reported by House Committee On:
Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness

Title: An act relating to crisis referral services for criminal justice and correctional personnel.

Brief Description: Concerning crisis referral services for criminal justice and correctional personnel.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections (originally sponsored by Senators Delvin, Hargrove, Brandland and Regala; by request of Lieutenant Governor).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness: 3/18/09 [DP].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires the Criminal Justice Training Commission (CJTC) to offer training on crisis recognition and crisis intervention services to employees that perform public safety duties.
- Requires the training to include techniques for recognizing conditions relating to personal crises such as mental health issues, chemical dependency, domestic violence, and financial problems.
- Requires the CJTC to provide examples of crisis referral agencies available to public safety employees.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY & EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Hurst, Chair; O'Brien, Vice Chair; Pearson, Ranking Minority Member; Klippert, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appleton, Goodman, Kirby and Ross.

Staff: Yvonne Walker (786-7841)

Background:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The Criminal Justice Training Commission (CJTC) was established in 1974. Its primary purpose is to provide basic law enforcement training, corrections training, and educational programs for criminal justice personnel, including commissioned officers, corrections officers, fire marshals, and prosecuting attorneys.

Basic law enforcement officer training is generally required of all law enforcement officers, with the exception of volunteers, and reserve officers employed in Washington. The training consists of a 720-hour program covering a wide variety of subjects including: constitutional and criminal law and procedures, criminal investigation, firearms training, and communication and writing skills. All law enforcement personnel hired, transferred, or promoted, are required to complete the "core training" requirements within six months unless the employee receives a waiver from the CJTC.

Summary of Bill:

The CJTC must provide a training session on personal crisis recognition and crisis intervention services to criminal justice personnel, correctional personnel, and all other employees of state and local agencies that perform public safety duties. The CJTC must consult with other public and private organizations that have expertise in crisis referral services.

The training must be a minimum of one hour of classroom or Internet instruction. The training must include instruction on the underlying causes and techniques for recognizing problems that may impact the lives of public safety employees such as mental health issues, chemical dependency, domestic violence, financial problems, and other personal crises. The CJTC may charge a reasonable fee to defer the cost of making the training available. The CJTC must also provide a list of examples of public and private crisis referral agencies available to public safety employees.

All communication and records for crisis referral services by employees and volunteers of public safety agencies must be confidential. Such information may only be revealed as to prevent reasonably certain death, substantial bodily harm, or the commission of a crime. Crisis referral services include all organizations that advise employees and volunteers about sources of treatment for personal problems.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This is a bill brought forward by the Lieutenant Governor that allows the Legislature to take care of law enforcement officers in this state. There are many suicides and substance abuse problems among law enforcement officers. Many of them do not know where to go for help and they cannot fix the problem themselves. It takes a special type of person to protect the lives and property of others. You cannot do a job effectively if you cannot take care of yourself. These officers need a place to go for help with their crisis issues. The help is needed before a crisis manifests and gets worst.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Delvin, prime sponsor; John Lovick, Snohomish County Sheriff Department; and Sean Riley, Safe Call Now.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.