

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6330

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Labor, Commerce & Consumer Protection, January 21, 2010

Title: An act relating to permitting the placement of human trafficking informational posters in rest areas.

Brief Description: Permitting the placement of human trafficking informational posters in rest areas.

Sponsors: Senators Kohl-Welles, Delvin, Haugen, Swecker, Kline, Fraser, Shin, Fairley and Roach.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor, Commerce & Consumer Protection: 1/19/10, 1/21/10 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE & CONSUMER PROTECTION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Kohl-Welles, Chair; Keiser, Vice Chair; Holmquist, Ranking Minority Member; Franklin, Honeyford, King and Kline.

Staff: Kathleen Buchli (786-7488)

Background: The Department of Transportation (Department) may provide information of special interest to the traveling public in information centers at safety rest areas. Maps, informational directories, and advertising pamphlets may be made available at safety rest areas to provide information to the public of places of interest within the state and of other subjects the Department deems desirable.

Summary of Bill: The Department may work with human trafficking victim advocates in developing informational posters for placement in rest areas. The Department may adopt policies on the placement of these posters and the posters may be in a variety of languages. The toll-free telephone numbers for the National Human Trafficking Resource Center and the Washington State Office of Crime Victims Advocacy must be included on the posters.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The Department is working on placing informational posters in rest stops along the I-5 corridor to get ready for the Olympics in Vancouver. It is urgent that we get this information out to the public in time for the Olympics. It is also important that this requirement be placed in statute even though the Department has begun its work. We have been focusing on Washington State and find that Washington State girls are being moved from this state to other places. Rural counties and cities are the source of these girls who are being sold. The I-5 corridor is an area to focus on; so many cases end up hitting truck stops and commercial sex venues on the I-5 corridor. If good people know what is happening, they will intervene. Girls can be trafficked between the ages of 11 to 14. There are between 100,000 to 300,000 girls trafficked a year. Buyers are shopping for young American girls; this is not just about foreign kids coming across borders. It would be easier to move a trafficked American girl into Canada, rather than a foreign girl across those borders. The posters must contain the information in English to address this. The Polaris Project recommends putting the posters in rest areas and to expand this to massage parlors, truck stops, and other areas that have been cited for trafficking. Other businesses should be encouraged to put up the poster.

OTHER: The Department is working with advocacy groups to come up with a plan to get the posters installed in rest areas in the weeks before the Olympics. Those groups would be responsible for installing them and monitoring them. The poster will be nonpermanent for now, but vandalism is always a concern and the groups will have to be responsible for replacing the posters if they are vandalized or removed. We are open to modifying the design of the poster and in making additions such as additional languages and the toll-free telephone number for the Office of Crime Victims Advocacy. The law is not black and white now and whether this can be done on a permanent basis is unclear. There are a number of other groups that may be lining up to get their group's information up next. The Department is working on a policy to address that in dealing with these significant social issues, and not open the door for every group. We need to develop a longer term strategy.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Kohl-Welles, prime sponsor; Linda Smith, Shared Hope International; John Chapman, Vancouver Police Department; Brianne, Victim of Human Trafficking; Emma Catague, Asian/Pacific Islander Women and Family Safety Center; Rose Gundersen, Washington Attorney General's Office; Rani Hong, Tronie Foundation.

OTHER: Yvonne Medina, Chris Christopher, Washington State Department of Transportation.