

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1858

As Reported By House Committee On:

Government Operations

Title: An act relating to the office of crime victims advocacy.

Brief Description: Establishing the office of crime victims advocacy in the department of community, trade, and economic development.

Sponsors: Representatives Ballasiotes, Costa, Robertson, Cody, Morris, Regala, Chopp, Ogden, Mitchell, Tokuda, Appelwick, Honeyford, Radcliff, Blanton, Dickerson, Campbell, Conway, Kessler and Ebersole.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Government Operations: 2/24/95, 2/28/95 [DP].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Reams, Chairman; Goldsmith, Vice Chairman; L. Thomas, Vice Chairman; Rust, Ranking Minority Member; Scott, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chopp; R. Fisher; Hargrove; Honeyford; Hymes; Mulliken; D. Schmidt; Sommers; Van Luven and Wolfe.

Staff: Bill Lynch (786-7092).

Background: The Office of Crime Victims Advocacy was created by executive order in 1990 and placed in the Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development. The office provides ombudsman service to crime victims by helping them locate and obtain services in their communities.

The office currently administers a grant program to enhance the funding for community-based treatment services available to victims of sex offenders.

These grants are awarded on a competitive basis to local governments, nonprofit community groups, and nonprofit treatment providers. Activities that can be funded through this grant program are limited to: (1) activities that provide effective treatment to victims of sex offenders; (2) activities that increase access to and availability of treatment for victims of sex offenders, particularly underserved

populations; and (3) activities that create, coordinate, or build on existing programs to make effective use of resources to provide treatment services to victims of sex offenders.

Summary of Bill: The Office of Crime Victims Advocacy is established by statute in the Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development. The office is directed to administer grant programs for sexual assault treatment and prevention services, assist communities in planning and implementing services for crime victims, advocate on behalf of crime victims in obtaining needed services and resources, and advise local and state governments on practices, policies, and priorities that impact crime victims.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 24, 1995.

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

Testimony For: The office already exists by executive order. This places the office into statute so that it won't exist at the whim of the Governor. The office fills a needed gap by coordinating services. The training programs for law enforcement, treatment providers, and victims are valuable.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Helen Harlow and Rose Crocco, Tennis Show Brigade; Debbie Ruggles, Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs; and Evelyn Franch, WCSAP.