

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SHB 2579

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Human Services & Corrections, February 23, 1996  
Ways & Means, February 26, 1996

**Title:** An act relating to services for victims of sexual abuse.

**Brief Description:** Consolidating and enhancing services for victims of sexual abuse.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Law & Justice (originally sponsored by Representatives Costa, Ballasiotes, Radcliff, Sheahan, Romero, Dellwo, Chopp, Murray, Robertson, Hickel, Mitchell, Cooke, Conway and Cody).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Human Services & Corrections: 2/22/96, 2/23/96 [DP-WM].  
Ways & Means: 2/26/96 [DP].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Hargrove, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Kohl, Long, Prentice, Schow, Smith, Thibaudeau and Zarelli.

**Staff:** Jodi Walker (786-7464)

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Loveland, Vice Chair; Bauer, Cantu, Drew, Finkbeiner, Fraser, Hargrove, Hochstatter, Johnson, Kohl, Long, McDonald, Pelz, Quigley, Roach, Sheldon, Snyder, Spanel, Strannigan, Sutherland, West, Winsley and Wojahn.

**Staff:** Susan Lucas (786-7711)

**Background:** Both the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and the Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development (DCTED) currently administer grant programs that provide treatment services to sexual assault victims.

Rape crisis centers are eligible for grants from DSHS. These centers hire and train victims' advocates to assist victims and their families during the investigation and prosecution of sexual assault cases. Victims' advocates must receive training through the criminal justice training program or through a program administered by the Washington Association of Prosecuting Attorneys and the Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs. Local, municipal, or county sources, whether public or private, must provide 25 percent of the funding for the victims' advocate grants.

DSHS must also provide comprehensive sexual assault services by licensed professionals to sexually abused children. The department may use appropriated funds for contracts or direct purchase of treatment services from community organizations and private service providers.

DCTED currently gives funding priority to applicants (local governments and nonprofit groups) representing well-established programs or new programs in areas where no programs exist. The department is directed to form a peer review committee, comprised of the executive director of the Crime Victims Advocacy Office and individuals who have experience in the treatment of victims of predatory violent sex offenders. The committee advises the department in awarding grants.

Recommendations were made by the Washington State Sexual Assault Services Advisory Committee regarding delivery of services to sexual assault victims, including consolidating services into one agency, pooling all funds with an even statewide distribution, and establishing service standards and a data collection system.

**Summary of Bill:** The Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development (DCTED) takes over Department of Social and Health Services responsibilities for sexual assault programs. No reduction in service levels occurs.

DCTED grant funds are given to applicants that can provide core treatment services, including information and referral, crisis intervention, medical and legal advocacy, support, and system coordination. Funds for specialized services (therapy, support groups, etc.) are disbursed on a regional competitive basis. DCTED grants for core services are no longer made on a competitive basis.

Further DCTED funding (under the Victims of Sexual Assault Act) is available to community sexual assault programs instead of rape crisis centers. The funding may be used to supervise victim advocates, as well as hiring and training. Victim advocates are no longer required to complete training through the formerly offered programs. In addition, local, municipal, or county matching funds for the victim advocate grants.

A DCTED peer review committee is comprised of persons knowledgeable or experienced in the management or delivery of treatment services to sex offense victims. The committee helps make funding decisions.

The sexual assault definition is expanded to include assault with the intent to commit rape of a child, child molestation, sexual misconduct with a minor, and crimes with sexual motivation. The personal representative definition includes an employee or volunteer from a community sexual assault program instead of a rape crisis center.

DCTED services for sexually abused children must address their special needs and also provide services to their families. These services can be provided by qualified, registered, or certified professionals, in addition to the licensed professionals currently required.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect on July 1, 1996.

**Testimony For (Human Services & Corrections):** This bill simply moves funds from DSHS to the Office of Crime Victim Advocacy to improve and expedite funding for sexual assault programs. Applicants must provide core services and meet accreditation standards, including training for victims' advocates. No competition for core services allows smaller, rural programs to receive adequate funding.

**Testimony Against (Human Services & Corrections):** None.

**Testified (Human Services & Corrections):** Rep. Costa (pro); Melissa Allen, St. Peter's Child Sexual Assault Program (pro); Deborah Ruggles, WA Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs (pro); Rosie Oreskovich, DSHS (pro); Edna Shim, King County Sexual Assault Resource Center (pro).

**Testimony For (Ways & Means):** The bill has no fiscal impact and is widely supported. The transfer of functions will consolidate all funding in the Office of Crime Victims Advocacy at CTED.

**Testimony Against (Ways & Means):** None.

**Testified (Ways & Means):** Laurie Delaney, WA Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs.