
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6207

State of Washington

54th Legislature

1996 Regular Session

By Senate Committee on Law & Justice (originally sponsored by Senators Haugen, Smith, Winsley, Hale, Long, Schow, Roach, Kohl, Prentice and Heavey)

Read first time 02/02/96.

1 AN ACT Relating to investigative interviews of child victim
2 witnesses; and creating new sections.

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

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that there is a
5 continuing need to improve the treatment of children in legal
6 proceedings and investigations concerning sexual abuse. The
7 legislature finds that interview protocols and training standards for
8 child sexual abuse interviewers should be developed and made available
9 for law enforcement agencies in order to:

10 (1) Eliminate unnecessary repetitive interviews and investigations
11 of child victim witnesses;

12 (2) Streamline and improve investigative practices and procedures
13 involving child victim witnesses;

14 (3) Improve the truth-finding process in cases involving child
15 victim witnesses; and

16 (4) Protect the rights of child victims, their families, and the
17 accused.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The Washington state institute for
2 public policy shall collect data and information from jurisdictions
3 within the state of Washington and outside the state of Washington,
4 including other nations, which have experience with developing
5 protocols and training standards for investigating child sexual abuse.
6 The Washington state institute for public policy shall study and
7 evaluate the data and information for the purpose of establishing
8 protocols and training standards for use by law enforcement agencies
9 and others who investigate child sexual abuse and interview child
10 sexual abuse victims. The protocols and training standards should have
11 as goals and objectives:

12 (a) Reducing the number of interviews, interview settings, and
13 medical examinations for child victim witnesses in suspected sexual
14 abuse cases;

15 (b) Developing interagency cooperation and agreements for
16 interviewing child victim witnesses;

17 (c) Improving the qualifications, selection process, and training
18 of child victim witness interviewers;

19 (d) Improving the reliability of child interviews in suspected
20 child sexual abuse cases; and

21 (e) Protecting the rights of child victims, their families, and the
22 accused.

23 (2) Not later than December 1, 1996, the Washington state institute
24 for public policy shall report to the legislature on the results of
25 this study. The report shall include model protocols and training
26 standards for law enforcement agencies and an evaluation as to whether
27 or not the protocols should be required or encouraged on a state-wide
28 basis, and how any expenses related to the adoption of these protocols
29 and standards could be financed. The report shall include any
30 recommended changes in the law.

31 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** If specific funding for the purposes of this
32 act, referencing this act by bill or chapter number, is not provided by
33 June 30, 1996, in the omnibus appropriations act, this act is null and
34 void.

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