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SENATE BILL 5919

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State of Washington

55th Legislature

1997 Regular Session

By Senators Roach, Winsley, Stevens, Zarelli, Wood, Schow and Oke

Read first time 02/19/97. Referred to Committee on Human Services & Corrections.

1 AN ACT Relating to the special sex offender sentencing alternative;  
2 and creating new sections.

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

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that the special  
5 sex offender sentencing alternative was created as an exception to the  
6 basic philosophy governing the sentencing reform act. The primary  
7 argument in favor of the sentencing alternative was that many victims,  
8 child victims in particular, might not cooperate with prosecution if  
9 the only possible outcome was certain punishment. Most child victims  
10 know or are related to their offenders and often express a wish that  
11 the offenders receive treatment.

12 (2) Because the percentage of sex offenders participating in the  
13 special sex offender sentencing alternative program has declined and  
14 because there is anecdotal evidence that some victims retrospectively  
15 feel that their offenders avoided the punishment they deserved by  
16 receiving the special sex offender sentencing alternative, the  
17 legislature finds that it is necessary to examine the special sex  
18 offender sentencing alternative to determine whether the original goals  
19 of the program are being met.

1        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 2.**    (1) The department of community, trade, and  
2 economic development shall contract with the Harborview medical center  
3 sexual assault center to conduct a study of the special sex offender  
4 sentencing alternative from moneys appropriated by the legislature.  
5 The Harborview medical center sexual assault center shall collect data  
6 and information on sex offenders, including special sex offender  
7 sentencing alternative participants and nonparticipants, from all  
8 jurisdictions within the state of Washington. The Harborview medical  
9 center sexual assault center shall study and compile the data and  
10 information for the purpose of presenting findings to the legislature  
11 in order to assist the legislature in evaluating the special sex  
12 offender sentencing alternative.

13        (2) The primary goals and objectives of the study are to determine:  
14 (a) The longer-term attitudes and perceptions toward the special sex  
15 offender sentencing alternative of victims whose offenders received the  
16 sentencing alternative; and (b) the relationships between attitudes and  
17 perceptions toward the special sex offender sentencing alternative and  
18 the current functioning of victims.

19        (3) Not later than December 1, 1998, the Harborview medical center  
20 sexual assault center shall report to the legislature on the results of  
21 this study. The report must include an explanation of the method of  
22 the study and its results, an evaluation as to whether or not the  
23 special sex offender sentencing alternative should be continued as a  
24 relevant and useful program, and any recommended changes in the law.

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