

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 6763

As Reported by House Committee On:

Criminal Justice & Corrections

Title: An act relating to a task force on funding for community-based services to victims of crime.

Brief Description: Creating a task force on services for crime victims.

Sponsors: Senators Costa, Hargrove, Long, Carlson, Winsley and Kohl-Welles.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Criminal Justice & Corrections: 2/28/02 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates a Washington State Task Force on Funding for Community-Based Services to Victims of Crime.
- Requires the task force to evaluate how the state funds community-based organizations that provide services to underserved victim populations.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives O'Brien, Chair; Lovick, Vice Chair; Ballasiotes, Ranking Minority Member; Ahern, Kagi, Kirby and Morell.

Staff: Yvonne Walker (786-7841).

Background:

Services available to crime victims often vary between communities and by the types of crimes committed.

The Office of Crime Victims' Advocacy, located within the Office of Community Development, has the responsibility for providing a focus within state government on the rights of, and services for, victims of crime.

Summary of Bill:

The Washington State Task Force on Funding for Community-Based Services to Victims of Crime is created and is chaired by the director of the Office of Community Development, or the director's designee.

The task force consists of the following members (or their designees): the director of the Office of Community Development; the secretary of the Department of Social and Health Services; the director of the Department of Labor and Industries; two legislators (representing each political party) from the Senate chosen by the President of the Senate; two legislators (representing each political party) from the House of Representatives chosen by the speaker; and between 11 to 15 additional members, selected by the director of the Office of Community Development. The additional members must include:

- at least one person that represents each community-based organization that focuses on providing services to homicide survivors, assault victims (other than sexual assault and domestic violence), robbery victims, child abuse victims, and victims of drunk and drugged drivers (vehicular assault and vehicular homicide);
- one representative of organizations that provide services primarily to domestic violence victims;
- one representative of organizations that provide services primarily to sexual assault victims;
- one representative of programs that provide services to victims who are deaf, blind, or otherwise disabled;
- one representative of organizations that provide services solely for victims to whom English is a second language;
- one representative of victim service programs administered by law enforcement agencies; and
- one representative of victim/witness assistance programs administered by county prosecuting attorneys.

Although the members of the task force must serve without compensation (excluding reimbursement for travel expenses), the Office of Community Development is responsible for providing any necessary administrative and clerical support to the task force.

The task force is responsible for carrying out the following activities:

- measuring and evaluating the progress of the state in providing funding to community-based programs that provide services to victims of crime, especially the underserved victim populations identified as: homicide survivors, physical assault victims (nondomestic violence and nonsexual assault related), robbery victims, child abuse victims, vehicular assault and homicide victims and survivors, and victims of property crimes;
- identifying available federal, state, and local programs that provide services to underserved victims;

- making recommendations on methods to provide a cost-effective coordinated system of support and assistance to persons who are victims of crime;
- making recommendations on funding necessary to provide appropriate services to the underserved victims, with recommendations on revenue sources; and
- identifying statutory and administrative barriers to improving the delivery of cost-effective and coordinated services to crime victims.

The task force must report its findings to the Governor and the Legislature by November 30, 2002. The task force expires March 1, 2003.

State and local government agencies that participate in the delivery of services to crime victims must, upon request, provide information and technical assistance to the task force, within existing funds.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Over the last several years, services for crime victims have evolved both in Washington as well as nationwide. This task force will review those various services to determine what is needed to be provided to underserved victims of crime such as homicide survivors. The task force will also bring all the necessary people together to look at how the state can do a better job at providing services.

This bill is an excellent representation of the broad spectrum of community services out there and what needs to be done to bring them all together in this state.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Costa, prime sponsor; Joan Guenther, Washington Coalition of Crime Victim Advocates; Jenny Wieland, Families and Friends of Violent Crime Victims; and Seth Dawson, Common Ground for Children and Families.