

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 6100

As Reported by House Committee On:
Early Learning & Human Services

Title: An act relating to clarifying and updating the administration of sexual assault grant programs by the department of commerce.

Brief Description: Updating the administration of the sexual assault grant programs.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections (originally sponsored by Senators Hargrove and Roach).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Early Learning & Human Services: 2/16/12, 2/21/12 [DP].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Makes technical changes to statutory provisions regarding sexual assault prevention programs and community treatment programs for sexual assault victims.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & HUMAN SERVICES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Kagi, Chair; Roberts, Vice Chair; Walsh, Ranking Minority Member; Hope, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Dickerson, Goodman, Johnson, Orwall and Overstreet.

Staff: Linda Merelle (786-7092).

Background:

The Office of Crime Victims Advocacy (OCVA) within the Department of Commerce administers State General Fund and federal grant programs to provide services to victims of sexual assault. Programs administered by the OCVA include both treatment and prevention services. These programs provide services for approximately 12,000 new victims of sexual assault each year. Over half of those who receive services are children. These programs ensure that every geographic county has a community sexual assault program that provides

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an array of services available at no cost and on a 24/7 basis to victims of sexual assault in their community.

Chapter 43.280 RCW contains provisions related to community treatment services for victims of sexual assault which date back to 1979. Similarly, the Victims of Sexual Assault Act was enacted in 1979 and codified in chapter 70.125 RCW. It contains provisions regarding a state plan for addressing sexual assault, statewide program services, financial assistance, and funding to community programs. In some instances, language in both chapters has become outdated or no longer reflects the work that is actually performed by the OCVA.

Summary of Bill:

References are updated to standardize and remove outdated or redundant language describing the OCVA's mission and activities providing services for victims of sexual assault. Language requiring formation of a peer review committee to advise the OCVA about eligibility for services is removed. New practice principles are articulated for professionals who work with sexual assault victims.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill is purely an update of statutes to reflect current practice of the OCVA. It is really a reflection of what has been the practice for some time. Standards are set in statute for the programs to meet, and updating has been an ongoing practice. When the Washington sexual assault services plan was adopted into statute, the plan included some components recognizing that for some communities there may be barriers to services. There was not a specific definition included in the plan, but barriers were to be considered in the service provision. Since the adoption of the plan, the practice of the OCVA has been to include grants to organizations qualified to provide sexual assault services. Underserved populations are factored into the funding formula, and issues of language, disability, and others are considered. There is some outreach to the deaf community and a provider who currently focuses on the deaf and hard of hearing community.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Lonnie Johns-Brown, Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs; and Stephanie Condon, Department of Commerce Office of Crime Victim Advocacy.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.