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**HOUSE BILL 2470**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2024 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Davis, Walen, Ryu, and Taylor

AN ACT Relating to creating a local sales and use tax to address gender-based violence; adding a new section to chapter 82.14 RCW; and creating a new section.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The legislature finds that the state of Washington has made great strides towards expanding access to civil protection orders in recent years. These statutory changes have led to a significant increase in protection order filings by victims of gender-based violence. In some counties, this has amounted to as much as a 50 percent increase in protection order petitions. Without additional resources, courts are unable to manage this substantial increase in volume. The overall increase in protection orders has also led to a commensurate increase in orders to surrender weapons, primarily associated with domestic violence cases. Courts are required by statute to hold compliance hearings related to orders to surrender weapons. Such hearings are imperative to ensure that firearms are in fact relinquished and survivors are safe from lethal harm. However, in practice, many jurisdictions are not holding weapons surrender compliance hearings, often due to resource constraints.

(2) The legislature further finds that in recent years, some of the community-based domestic violence and sexual assault agencies in Washington state began turning away survivors for the first time in their histories due to capacity constraints. Additionally, while the legislature has made massive investments in wages for numerous categories of frontline workers, including behavioral health and long-term care workers, there have been no increases in wages and benefits for frontline staff that serve victims of gender-based violence. Many of these victim advocates are survivors themselves and they are not paid anywhere near a living wage.

(3) Therefore, it is the intent of the legislature to allow counties to levy a 0.1 percent sales and use tax to address gender-based violence in their communities.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 82.14 RCW to read as follows:

(1) A county legislative authority may impose, without a proposition approved by a majority of persons voting, a sales and use tax in accordance with the terms of this chapter.

(2) The tax authorized in this section is in addition to other taxes authorized by law and must be collected from those persons who are taxable by the state under chapters 82.08 and 82.12 RCW upon the occurrence of any taxable event within the county. The rate of tax equals 0.1 percent of the selling price in the case of a sales tax or value of the article used in the case of a use tax.

(3) The tax imposed pursuant to subsection (1) of this section must be deducted from the amount of tax otherwise required to be collected or paid over to the revenue under chapter 82.08 or 82.12 RCW. The revenue must perform the collection of such taxes on behalf of the county at no cost to the county and the state treasurer must distribute those taxes as available on a monthly basis to the county or upon the direction of the county to its treasurer or fiscal agent, paying agent, or trustee.

(4) Moneys collected under this section must be used to address gender-based violence. Allowable uses include, but are not limited to:

(a) Funding for superior and district courts to manage the increase in civil protection order filings and weapons surrender compliance work;

(b) Funding for victim advocates embedded in county clerks' offices to assist petitioners with filing protection orders;

(c) Creation of and funding for advocacy programs embedded in prosecutor's offices that provides free legal assistance to victims seeking protection orders;

(d) Funding for community-based domestic violence and sexual assault victim's services agencies;

(e) Funding for civil legal aid for survivors of gender-based violence;

(f) Funding for housing for survivors of gender-based violence and their children;

(g) Creation of and funding for the administration of firearm relinquishment programs for perpetrators of gender-based violence;

(h) Funding for domestic violence perpetrator treatment programs;

(i) Creation of and funding for restorative justice programs for perpetrators and victims of gender-based violence;

(j) Funding for victim advocates embedded in law enforcement agencies and prosecutor's offices;

(k) Funding for domestic violence high-risk teams; and

(l) Gender-based violence prevention programs.

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