

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1501

As Reported by House Committee On:
Community Safety, Justice, & Reentry

Title: An act relating to authorizing additional counseling services for immediate family members of homicide victims.

Brief Description: Authorizing additional counseling services for immediate family members of homicide victims.

Sponsors: Representatives Steele, Caldier, Santos, Leavitt, Schmidt, Eslick, Orwall, Reeves and Graham.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Community Safety, Justice, & Reentry: 2/7/23, 2/13/23 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Allows the Crime Victims Compensation Program to provide more than 12 counseling sessions to the immediate family members of a homicide victim.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SAFETY, JUSTICE, & REENTRY

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Goodman, Chair; Simmons, Vice Chair; Mosbrucker, Ranking Minority Member; Griffey, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Davis, Farivar, Fosse, Graham and Ramos.

Staff: Jim Morishima (786-7191).

Background:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The Crime Victims Compensation Program (CVCP) is administered by the Department of Labor and Industries to provide benefits to victims of criminal acts. For example, the CVCP provides appropriate counseling services to the immediate family members of a homicide victim. The counseling services are limited to 12 sessions after the victim's claim has been allowed.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The Crime Victims Compensation Program may provide more than 12 counseling sessions to the immediate family members of a homicide victim if a licensed mental health provider determines that:

- additional sessions are needed as a direct result of the near-term consequences of the related effects of the homicide; and
- the recipient of the services would benefit from additional sessions.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill clarifies that the additional sessions relate to mental health treatment rather than behavioral health treatment by:

- changing the professional making the determination of need from a licensed behavioral health provider to a licensed mental health provider;
- focusing the determination the professional makes regarding the near-term consequences of the homicide on the need for additional sessions, rather than the unmet behavioral health needs of the recipient; and
- clarifying that the determination must be that the recipient of the counseling would benefit from additional sessions, rather than the recipient of the services.

The substitute bill also removes the requirement that the professional acts within the professional's scope of practice when making the determination.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) When an individual is killed, the lives of their family are forever changed. The 12 counseling sessions are not a magic number to cure this trauma. Families often have to

pay out-of-pocket for additional counseling. Grief, post-traumatic stress disorder, and healing of the brain do not have a timeline. This bill will help people get more visits without worrying about the financial burden. This will help victims begin the healing process.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) Victims should be supported. This bill should be amended to clarify that it applies to mental health counseling, not behavioral health, which includes other types of benefits.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Mike Steele, prime sponsor; and Deana Knowlton.

(Other) Tammy Fellin, Department of Labor and Industries.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.