

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1512

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Law & Justice, March 22, 2023

Title: An act relating to providing tools and resources for the location and recovery of missing persons.

Brief Description: Providing tools and resources for the location and recovery of missing persons.

Sponsors: Representatives Mosbrucker, Orwall, Simmons, Jacobsen, Leavitt, Rule, Gregerson, Eslick, Graham, Doglio, Reed and Morgan.

Brief History: Passed House: 3/1/23, 96-0.

Committee Activity: Law & Justice: 3/20/23, 3/22/23 [DP-WM].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs the Office of the Attorney General to publish and maintain a missing persons toolkit containing information on locating and recovering missing persons.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Dhingra, Chair; Trudeau, Vice Chair; Padden, Ranking Member; Kuderer, McCune, Pedersen, Salomon, Torres, Valdez, Wagoner and Wilson, L..

Staff: Kevin Black (786-7747)

Background: In 2004, the Office of the Attorney General (AGO) convened the Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains Task Force, which developed and published a missing persons resource toolkit containing information and resources related to the process of reporting a missing person. AGO last updated the toolkit in 2007.

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.

In 2022, the state established the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and People Task Force (MMIWP Task Force) in AGO and directed the MMIWP Task Force to review the laws and policies pertaining to missing and murdered Indigenous people, and develop related recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature. The MMIWP Task Force released an interim report in 2022 with ten recommendations. The eighth recommendation is to update and re-issue the missing persons resource toolkit.

Summary of Bill: Subject to appropriations, AGO must publish and maintain on its website by November 1, 2023, a missing persons toolkit containing information on locating and recovering missing persons, including how to report a missing person, the kinds of information that may be helpful to provide, suggestions for resources such as counseling to navigate personal or community difficulties, and information which is specifically tailored for reporting and recovering missing Indigenous women and persons, and persons who are particularly vulnerable due to age, health, or mental or physical disabilities or conditions. The toolkit must be published in at least the top ten languages spoken in Washington State. AGO must make an abbreviated hard copy version available to law enforcement entities and update the toolkit annually by November 1st of each year.

This act may be known and cited as the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Person and Lucian Act.

Appropriation: The bill contains a section or sections to limit implementation to the availability of amounts appropriated for that specific purpose.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This is a task force recommendation to prevent the crisis of missing indigenous women. It also honors Lucian who went missing in September in Yakima and was later found deceased. We had nothing to offer the family to tell them what they should be doing. This toolkit will really benefit Indian nations. A lot of individuals from the Yakama nation have been impacted by missing persons. The missing persons process is impossibly complex. It is hard to understand what resources are available and when to use them. Distributing accurate information to law enforcement in particular will be helpful.

OTHER: We appreciate the efforts to direct resources and energy towards recovery of missing persons. We have concerns about the involvement of the Attorney General's Office, which is not a law enforcement agency. An agency like the Washington State Patrol would be more equipped to take on this responsibility.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Gina Mosbrucker, Prime Sponsor; Councilwoman Charlene Tillequots, Yakama Nation Tribal Council; Marissa Perez, The Yarrow Project.

OTHER: Taylor Gardner, Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.