

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6555

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Children & Family Services & Corrections, February 4, 2004

Title: An act relating to eliminating credentialing barriers for sex offender treatment providers.

Brief Description: Eliminating credentialing barriers for sex offender treatment providers.

Sponsors: Senators Franklin, Keiser and Thibaudeau; by request of Department of Health.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Children & Family Services & Corrections: 2/4/04 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6555 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Stevens, Chair; Parlette, Vice Chair; Carlson, Deccio, Hargrove, McAuliffe and Regala.

Staff: Fara Daun (786-7459)

Background: The Department of Health regulates the credentialing of sex offender treatment providers. The general qualifications that sex offender treatment providers must meet are established in statute. Based on the statutory requirements, the Department of Health and the health profession boards develop more specific standards to determine entrance into the profession. Sex offender treatment providers certified by the Department of Health treat juvenile and adult sex offenders and sexually violent predators. They also perform psychosexual evaluations in proceedings for marriage dissolution and nonparental custody actions where there has been evidence of child sexual abuse.

In 2002, the Health Care Personnel Shortage Task Force examined the extent of Washington's health care personnel shortage and developed recommendations for addressing the shortage of health care workers, including sex offender treatment providers.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Certified affiliate sex offender treatment providers are a new category of sex offender treatment providers. A certified affiliate sex offender treatment provider is a credentialed health professional certified by the Department of Health to examine and treat sex offenders under the supervision of a certified sex offender treatment provider. Certified affiliate sex offender treatment providers may perform the same services as a certified sex offender treatment provider but must be supervised by a certified sex offender treatment provider. The Secretary of Health is authorized to issue certifications; determine minimum education, experience, and training requirements; and deny certification in accordance with the Uniform Disciplinary Act. Certified affiliate sex offender treatment providers are covered by the Uniform Disciplinary Act.

Certified affiliate sex offender treatment providers may not treat level III sex offenders or sexually violent predators, or perform SSOA evaluations unless they have 1,000 hours of experience.

Technical changes are made to statutes referencing certified sex offender treatment providers to include certified affiliate sex offender treatment providers.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The original bill was not considered.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This certification formalizes an existing process. Affiliate providers must have the same education as fully certified providers, but are affiliates until they have completed the 2,000 hours of supervised experience required for full certification. Because sex offender treatment is usually only part of a provider's practice, they are allowed up to seven years to complete the 2,000 hours for full certification. There is an agreed amendment to the substitute bill that would require an affiliate provider to have 1,000 hours experience before treating level III sex offenders or sexually violent predators, or making evaluations for the purpose of the special sex offender sentencing alternative (SSOSA).

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Rosa Franklin, prime sponsor (pro): Ron Weaver, Department of Health (pro); Tom McBride, Washington Association of Prosecuting Attorneys (pro with amendment); Victoria Roberts, Department of Corrections (pro).