

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1160

As Passed House:
February 28, 2005

Title: An act relating to reducing workplace violence in state hospitals.

Brief Description: Reducing workplace violence in state hospitals.

Sponsors: By Representatives Conway, Wood, Green, Hudgins, McCoy, Lovick, Darneille, Morrell, Chase, Cody, Kenney and Sells.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Commerce & Labor: 1/24/05, 1/27/05 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/28/05, 85-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Restores a requirement that the Department of Social and Health Services report annually to the Legislature on its efforts to reduce violence in state mental hospitals.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Conway, Chair; Wood, Vice Chair; Condotta, Ranking Minority Member; Crouse, Hudgins, McCoy and Sump.

Staff: Jill Reinmuth (786-7134).

Background:

According to a Department of Labor and Industries report published in 2004, data from 1995 to 2000 show that social services and health services accounted for over 50 percent of assault- or violence-related claims in the workplace. From 1993 to 2003, the rate of assault-related claims at state mental hospitals was 8.4 per 100 full-time employees.

Legislation enacted in 2000 required state mental hospitals to take certain actions related to protecting employees from workplace violence. In particular, state hospitals were required to:

- develop and implement plans to protect employees from workplace violence;
- provide violence prevention training; and
- keep records of violent acts committed against employees or patients at the hospitals.

In addition, the Department of Social and Health Services was required to report annually to the Legislature on efforts to reduce workplace violence annually.

Legislation enacted in 2003 repealed this reporting requirement.

Summary of Bill:

The requirement that the Department of Social and Health Services report annually on its efforts to reduce violence in state hospitals is restored. The report must be made to the House Commerce & Labor Committee and the Senate Commerce & Trade Committee by September 1 of each year.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 20, 2005.

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

Testimony For: Staff at state mental hospitals have the highest rate of workplace injuries. In December 2004, there were 47 assaults by patients against staff at state mental hospitals. In other words, there was more than one assault per day. This information will help make these workplaces safer.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Bev Hermanson, Washington Federation of State Employees.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.