

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1311

As Reported by House Committee On:
Public Safety

Title: An act relating to sunseting a nonoperating advisory board reporting to the state patrol.

Brief Description: Concerning a nonoperating advisory board reporting to the state patrol.

Sponsors: Representatives S. Hunt and Holy; by request of Washington State Patrol.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Public Safety: 1/27/15, 1/30/15 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Terminates the advisory board for the Missing and Exploited Children Task Force.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Goodman, Chair; Orwall, Vice Chair; Klippert, Ranking Minority Member; Hayes, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appleton, Griffey, Moscoso, Pettigrew and Wilson.

Staff: Yvonne Walker (786-7841).

Background:

In 1999 the Legislature enacted the Teeka Lewis Act which created the Missing and Exploited Children Task Force (MECTF). The MECTF is a multi-agency task force, under the direction of the Washington State Patrol (WSP), focused on identifying, arresting, and convicting those individuals who exploit children. Crimes investigated by the MECTF include Communication With a Minor for Immoral Purposes; Sexual Exploitation of a Minor; Possession of Depictions of Minors Engaged in Sexually Explicit Conduct; and dealing in Depictions of Minors Engaged in Sexually Explicit Conduct. The MECTF is available to provide on-site assistance, case management, and training; works closely with federal, state,

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and local agencies to accomplish its mission; and is available to assist agencies that do not have the resources or training necessary to investigate crimes against children.

In 1999 an advisory board (Board) for the MECTF was also established. The six-member advisory Board advises the Chief of the WSP on the objectives, conduct, management, and coordination of the various activities of the MECTF. Five members of the Board are appointed by the Chief of the WSP which includes a county prosecuting attorney, a municipal police chief, a county sheriff, a representative of the WSP, and one person representing parents of missing or exploited children. The sixth member is appointed by the Attorney General. The Board members serve two-year terms.

Over the years, Board participation was extended to include additional stakeholders such as representatives from federal law enforcement agencies and state social service agencies. In addition, since the inception of the Board, other local and federal agencies have created investigative units over the years which are dedicated to Internet and child exploitation investigations similar to the MECTF. The Federal Bureau of Investigation's Crimes Against Children, Internet Crimes Against Children, and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, all have similar duties as what the MECTF Board was originally established to accomplish.

The MECTF Board has not met since 2010.

Summary of Bill:

The MECTF Board is terminated and will cease to exist under the act.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This is a WSP request bill. The METCF will continue to operate and perform its current functions, however, the Board is not working anymore and has not met in quite some time. Over the years, many agencies across the state have expanded their duties to do this type of investigating as it relates to children, and their duties are similar to the duties of the Board. The elimination of this Board is just a bookkeeping measure. The WSP will have the pleasure of continuing the duties of the METCF but recommends eliminating the Board as purely a housekeeping measure.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Hunt, prime sponsor; and Rob Huss, Washington State Patrol.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.