

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1557

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Public Safety

**Title:** An act relating to creating the safe streets pilot project.

**Brief Description:** Creating the safe streets pilot project.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Jinkins, Fey, Sawyer, Kirby, Stambaugh, Muri, Kilduff, Appleton and Goodman.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Public Safety: 2/6/17, 2/9/17 [DPS].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Creates the Safe Streets Pilot Project within the Washington State Department of Commerce.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Goodman, Chair; Pellicciotti, Vice Chair; Klippert, Ranking Minority Member; Hayes, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appleton, Chapman, Griffey, Holy, Orwall, Pettigrew and Van Werven.

**Staff:** Kelly Leonard (786-7147).

**Background:**

The Washington State Department of Commerce (Commerce) is charged with promoting sustainable community and economic vitality in Washington. Commerce administers a diverse portfolio of more than 100 programs and several state boards and commissions, with duties related to economic development, housing, and crime victims, as well as the administration of grants, loans, and contracts on a wide variety of subjects.

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

The Washington State Institute of Public Policy (WSIPP) carries out practical, non-partisan research at the direction of the Legislature.

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### **Summary of Substitute Bill:**

The Safe Streets Pilot Project (Project) is created for the purpose of fostering community engagement. Commerce must administer the Project, including adopting policies and procedures necessary for the application process, grant disbursement, tracking compliance and proper use of funds, and measuring outcomes.

The Project includes two grant awards, one in Eastern Washington and one in Western Washington, to eligible applicants meeting the following criteria:

- a public agency or nongovernmental organization, and not a law enforcement agency;
- prior experience with safe streets initiatives or police-community engagement;
- established or is willing to establish a coordinated effort with committed partners, which must include law enforcement; and
- established priorities, policies, and measurable goals in compliance with the requirements of the Project.

The grant recipient must complete tasks in five areas, with specific requirements provided in the bill, including:

1. leading and facilitating neighborhood organizing initiatives;
2. building substantive law enforcement-community partnerships;
3. educating residents on, and fostering neighborhood watch programs aimed at, providing timely and detailed information to law enforcement so they can respond quickly, and creating positive connections among neighbors and law enforcement through community engagement;
4. mobilizing youth in the community, especially high school and middle school age youth; and
5. engaging businesses to help prevent crimes, such as vandalism and burglaries, through safety training and other prevention initiatives.

Commerce must require grant recipients to report information on the outcomes of the Project based on reporting guidelines developed by the WSIPP. The reporting guidelines should be reliable and valid indicators of improved criminal justice-related outcomes, which may include, but are not limited to, crime rates, community engagement with law enforcement, and community perceptions of law enforcement.

The grant recipient must be selected and receiving funds by November 1, 2017. Commerce must submit a preliminary report with details on the selected grant recipient by January 1, 2018, and a final report on the Project by December 1, 2019.

### **Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:**

The substitute bill requires the awarding of two grants (rather than one grant), with one recipient in Western Washington and one recipient in Eastern Washington. The substitute bill

removes from the grant eligibility requirements that an applicant must be located in a county meeting certain criteria, which currently includes only Pierce County.

The substitute bill requires the WSIPP to develop options for reporting guidelines, which should be reliable and valid indicators of improved criminal justice-related outcomes, including those specified in the underlying bill. The substitute bill requires Commerce to use the reporting guidelines developed by the WSIPP.

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**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) This bill is about building trusting relationships between the community and law enforcement. The Safe Streets Campaign in Pierce County has a long, successful record of building strong community relationships with law enforcement. This bill is meant to capitalize on their efforts through the creation of a pilot project, which will help the state measure outcomes and understand how to improve relations and advance public safety.

The Safe Streets Campaign is a comprehensive model that includes neighborhood organizing, neighborhood watch, and youth mobilization, among other components. It is a model for building positive police-community relationships, which are fundamental to a healthy and safe society. Communities should put structures and processes in place to connect with law enforcement, share concerns, and become informed. Communities also need to increase the government's understanding of community perceptions of law enforcement. In addition, youth organizing and mobilization is critical to advancing public safety by keeping children involved in the community and keeping them in school. All of these goals are part of the Safe Streets Campaign, which has been remarkably successful in decreasing crime rates and improving high school graduation rates in Pierce County.

Community engagement is an important part of reducing the number of violent interactions between law enforcement and the public. Law enforcement and communities should listen to each other. Participants in the Safe Streets Campaign have observed decreases in crime and gang activity. Trusting relationships help agencies and communities manage stressful times. As the nation debates issues concerning police and community trust, this bill is a great way to reinstitute and test a model that works really well. The bill will facilitate Safe Streets Campaign's efforts in Pierce County, and it will help the state take the first step towards using this model in other areas and contexts.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Representative Jenkins, prime sponsor; Priscella Lisicich and Wes Carter, Safe Streets; Debbie Winskill, Tacoma School District; James McMahan, Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs; Bob Sheehan, Safe Streets Board and City of DuPont Police Department; and John Sheeran, Pierce County Prosecuting Attorney's Office.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.