H-2418.1

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**HOUSE BILL 2132**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2024 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Schmick, Graham, and Dent

AN ACT Relating to reducing training costs for small county offices of coroners or medical examiners; and amending RCW 36.24.205, 36.24.210, and 43.101.480.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

**Sec.**  RCW 36.24.205 and 2021 c 127 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

Within 12 months of being elected or appointed to the office, a coroner or medical examiner in a county with a population of more than 40,000 people must have a certificate of completion of medicolegal forensic investigation training that complies with the standards adopted for the medicolegal training academy adopted by the criminal justice training commission in conjunction with the Washington association of coroners and medical examiners and a practicing physician selected by the commission pursuant to RCW 43.101.480. This requirement does not apply to an elected prosecutor acting as the ex officio coroner in a county. All medicolegal investigative personnel employed by any coroner's or medical examiner's office in a county with a population of more than 40,000 people must complete medicolegal forensic investigation training as required under RCW 43.101.480. A county in which the coroner or county medical examiner is required to and has not obtained such certification within 12 months of assuming office may have its reimbursement from the death investigations account reduced as provided under RCW 68.50.104.

**Sec.**  RCW 36.24.210 and 2021 c 127 s 2 are each amended to read as follows:

Except those run by a county prosecutor, all county coroner's offices and medical examiner's offices in a county with a population of more than 40,000 people must be accredited by either the international association of coroners and medical examiners or the national association of medical examiners no later than July 1, 2025, and maintain continued accreditation thereafter. A county that contracts for its coroner or medical examiner services with an accredited coroner or medical examiner's office in another county does not need to maintain accreditation.

**Sec.**  RCW 43.101.480 and 2021 c 127 s 3 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The following requirements apply only in counties with a population of more than 40,000 people:

(a) ((~~All elected~~)) Elected coroners, appointed coroners, persons serving as coroners, medical examiners, and ((~~all~~)) other full-time medicolegal investigative personnel employed by a county coroner's or medical examiner's office must successfully complete medicolegal forensic investigation training through the medicolegal training academy program within 12 months of being elected, appointed, or employed unless otherwise exempted by the commission or statute. This section does not apply to elected prosecutors who are coroners in their counties.

(b) ((~~All part-time~~)) Part-time medicolegal investigative personnel employed by a county coroner's or medical examiner's office must successfully complete medicolegal forensic investigation training through the medicolegal training academy program within 18 months of being employed unless otherwise exempted by the commission.

(2) The commission, in conjunction with the Washington association of coroners and medical examiners and a practicing physician selected by the commission, shall develop the medicolegal forensic investigation training curriculum and adopt the standards for the medicolegal training academy and any exemption from the requirement to complete the medicolegal forensic investigation training. The commission shall exempt from this requirement any coroner, medical examiner, or medicolegal investigative personnel who has obtained training comparable to the medicolegal forensic investigation training by virtue of educational or professional training or experience.

(3) The commission must certify successful completion of the medicolegal forensic investigation training or exemption from the medicolegal training requirement within 60 days from the receipt of proof of completion or request for exemption.

(4) The medicolegal forensic investigation training required under this section must:

(a) Meet the recommendations of the national commission on forensic science for certification and accreditation; and

(b) Satisfy the requirements for training on the subject of sudden, unexplained child death including, but not limited to, sudden infant death syndrome developed pursuant to RCW 43.103.100 and missing persons protocols pursuant to RCW 43.103.110.

(5) Certification under this section is a condition of continued employment in a coroner's or medical examiner's office.

(6) A county in which a coroner, person serving as coroner, medical examiner, or other medicolegal investigative employee, who has not otherwise been exempted by the commission, is not certified within 12 months of being elected, appointed, or employed as required by this section, may have its reimbursement from the death investigations account reduced as provided under RCW 68.50.104 until the office is in compliance with all requirements under this section.

**--- END ---**