

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1498

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Appropriations

**Title:** An act relating to domestic violence co-responder programs.

**Brief Description:** Concerning domestic violence co-responder programs.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Davis, Couture, Macri, Griffey, Walen, Reed, Simmons, Goodman, Parshley, Leavitt, Pollet, Hill, Salahuddin and Scott.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Appropriations: 1/29/25, 2/6/25 [DPS].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Creates the Domestic Violence Co-Responder Account (Account).
- Establishes an additional \$100 fee on marriage licenses and requires revenues from the fee to be deposited into the Account.
- Requires expenditures from the Account to only be used for a new Domestic Violence Co-Responder Grant Program administered by the Office of Crime Victims Advocacy.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 25 members: Representatives Ormsby, Chair; Gregerson, Vice Chair; Macri, Vice Chair; Couture, Ranking Minority Member; Connors, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Schmick, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Berg, Bergquist, Callan, Corry, Cortes, Doglio, Dye, Fitzgibbon, Keaton, Leavitt, Lekanoff, Manjarrez, Peterson, Pollet, Springer, Stonier, Street, Thai and Tharinger.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Marshall and

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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 part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

Rude.

**Minority Report:** Without recommendation. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Penner, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Burnett and Caldier.

**Staff:** Jessica Van Horne (786-7288).

**Background:**

*Marriage License Fees.*

Marriage license fees are established by statute. The fees are collected by the county auditor at the time of application for a marriage license. Some fees are specific to marriage licenses, including:

- an \$8 fee for the issuance of a marriage license;
- a \$5 fee for activities to prevent child abuse and neglect, to be transmitted to the state General Fund; and
- a \$10 fee to be deposited into the state General Fund for activities for the purposes of the Displaced Homemaker Act, which expired in 2015.

A county legislative authority may impose additional fees on marriage licenses to fund certain purposes, including a fee of up to \$15 for the purpose of funding family services such as family support centers, and a fee of up to \$8 for the purpose of funding family court services.

In addition to fees specific to marriage licenses, there are other document recording fees and surcharges that apply to all documents recorded by the county auditor. Examples include, but are not limited to, a \$5 fee for the first page of a recorded instrument, and a \$5 surcharge to support the preservation of historic documents of county offices and departments.

Due to the ability of counties to impose additional fees at the discretion of the county legislative authority, the total cost to obtain a marriage license varies on a county-by-county basis, ranging from \$36 to \$72 per license depending on the county in which a couple applies.

*Office of Crime Victims Advocacy.*

The Office of Crime Victims Advocacy (OCVA) is housed within the Department of Commerce. Among other activities, the OCVA administers grant programs for services to victims of crime and prevention activities as authorized by state or federal legislation, budget, or executive order.

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**Summary of Substitute Bill:**

An additional \$100 fee is imposed on marriage licenses, increasing the total cost to obtain a marriage license from a range of \$36 to \$72 per license, to \$136 to \$172 per license, depending on the county in which the license is obtained.

The Domestic Violence Co-Responder Account (Account) is created. The Account is an appropriated account. All revenues from the new \$100 fee on marriage licenses must be deposited into the Account. Expenditures from the Account may only be used for a new Domestic Violence Co-Responder Grant Program (Program) administered by the OCVA. The Program must award matching grants to cities and counties for the purpose of establishing and operating domestic violence co-responder programs, provide contracted technical assistance and training for grantees, and provide contracted services to assist grantees in billing health insurance for domestic violence co-responder services. A "domestic violence co-responder program" is a program using domestic violence victim advocates that are summoned by law enforcement to the scene of a domestic violence incident, and that provide whole family support, resource connection, and care navigation for victims.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:**

The substitute bill specifies that the OCVA must contract for technical assistance and training for grantees of the Program using a service provider that has demonstrated effectiveness in providing domestic violence co-responder services.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 21, 2025.

**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) Domestic violence co-responder programs do critical work in responding to domestic violence incidents. These programs apply the behavioral health co-responder model to domestic violence. Co-responders are licensed mental health clinicians and certified victim advocates who partner with law enforcement agencies to respond to a variety of calls. Many speak languages other than English, and are able to make sure that survivors are heard and the truth can be told. Holistic support can help break the cycle of violence. Providing funding for these programs will ensure that compassionate care is available for survivors of intimate partner and family violence.

Law enforcement agencies are benefiting from using these programs and the resources they offer officers as they respond to incidents of domestic violence. Officers feel like they are

making a positive long-term impact in the community when they can work with co-responders, as they are better able to adopt a victim-centered approach that benefits all members of the family. The program would be valuable to every city in the state.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) While victim service providers appreciate the intent of the bill and acknowledge that the programs that would be funded under the bill show promise, providers are concerned about the budgetary impacts and how new these programs are. Federal funding for crime victim services programs is declining, and many victim service providers serving victims of domestic violence are in jeopardy. Programs across the state will experience cuts without a significant investment from the state. It is unrealistic to launch new programs when current programs are at risk of being cut. The state should invest in current programs instead of expanding them.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support) Katya Wojcik, Project Be Free; Landon Meyer, Kent Police Department; and Alice Butler, Project Be Free.

(Other) Sherrie Tinoco, Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

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