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**SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5356**

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**State of Washington**

**69th Legislature**

**2025 Regular Session**

**By** Senate Law & Justice (originally sponsored by Senators Orwall, Hasegawa, Nobles, and C. Wilson)

READ FIRST TIME 02/07/25.

1 AN ACT Relating to training provided by the criminal justice  
2 training commission on a victim-centered, trauma-informed approach to  
3 interacting with victims and responding to calls involving gender-  
4 based violence or sexual violence; amending RCW 43.101.270,  
5 43.101.272, and 43.101.273; reenacting and amending RCW 43.101.276;  
6 and providing an effective date.

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

8 **Sec. 1.** RCW 43.101.270 and 2015 c 286 s 2 are each amended to  
9 read as follows:

10 (1) Each year the criminal justice training commission shall  
11 offer an intensive, integrated training session on investigating and  
12 prosecuting sexual assault cases. The training shall place particular  
13 emphasis on the development of professionalism and sensitivity  
14 towards the victim and the victim's family.

15 (2) The commission shall seek advice from the Washington  
16 association of prosecuting attorneys, the Washington defender  
17 association, the Washington association of sheriffs and police  
18 chiefs, ~~((and))~~ the Washington coalition of sexual assault programs,  
19 and the student achievement council.

20 (3) The training shall be an integrated approach to sexual  
21 assault cases so that prosecutors, law enforcement, defenders, Title

1 IX investigators that serve institutions of higher education, and  
2 victim advocates can all benefit from the training.

3 (4) The training shall be self-supporting through fees charged to  
4 the participants of the training.

5 (5) The training shall include a reference to the possibility  
6 that a court may allow children under the age of (~~fourteen~~) 18 to  
7 testify in a room outside the presence of the defendant and the jury  
8 pursuant to RCW 9A.44.150.

9 **Sec. 2.** RCW 43.101.272 and 2023 c 197 s 3 are each amended to  
10 read as follows:

11 (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this  
12 specific purpose, the commission shall provide ongoing specialized,  
13 intensive, and integrative training for persons responsible for  
14 investigating sexual assault and other gender-based violence  
15 involving adult victims, including persons responsible for regularly  
16 investigating prohibited conduct at institutions of higher education  
17 under Title IX of the education amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. Sec.  
18 1681—1683, and as thereafter amended, and the highest ranking  
19 supervisors and commanders overseeing sexual assault and other  
20 gender-based violence investigations. The training must be based on a  
21 victim-centered, trauma-informed approach to responding to sexual  
22 assault. Among other subjects, the training must include content on  
23 the neurobiology of trauma and trauma-informed interviewing,  
24 counseling, and investigative techniques.

25 (2) The training must: Be based on research-based practices and  
26 standards; offer participants an opportunity to practice interview  
27 skills and receive feedback from instructors; minimize the trauma of  
28 all persons who are interviewed during abuse investigations; provide  
29 methods of reducing the number of investigative interviews necessary  
30 whenever possible; assure, to the extent possible, that investigative  
31 interviews are thorough, objective, and complete; recognize needs of  
32 special populations; recognize the nature and consequences of  
33 victimization; require investigative interviews to be conducted in a  
34 manner most likely to permit the interviewed persons the maximum  
35 emotional comfort under the circumstances; address record retention  
36 and retrieval; address documentation of investigative interviews; and  
37 educate investigators on the best practices for notifying victims of  
38 the results of forensic analysis of sexual assault kits and other

1 significant events in the investigative process, including for active  
2 investigations and cold cases.

3 (3) In developing the training, the commission shall seek advice  
4 from the Washington association of sheriffs and police chiefs, the  
5 Washington coalition of sexual assault programs, and experts on  
6 sexual assault, gender-based violence, and the neurobiology of  
7 trauma. The commission shall consult with the Washington association  
8 of prosecuting attorneys and the student achievement council in an  
9 effort to design training containing consistent elements for all  
10 professionals engaged in interviewing and interacting with sexual  
11 assault victims in the criminal justice system.

12 (4) Officers assigned to regularly investigate sexual assault and  
13 other gender-based violence involving adult victims and the highest  
14 ranking supervisors and commanders overseeing those investigations  
15 shall complete the training within one year of being assigned.

16 **Sec. 3.** RCW 43.101.273 and 2023 c 197 s 6 are each amended to  
17 read as follows:

18 (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this  
19 specific purpose, the commission shall, in partnership with the  
20 special resource prosecutor under RCW 43.101.279, develop and conduct  
21 specialized, intensive, and integrative training for persons  
22 responsible for prosecuting sexual assault cases involving adult  
23 victims.

24 (2) The training must:

25 (a) Use a victim-centered, trauma-informed approach to  
26 prosecuting sexual assaults including, but not limited to, the  
27 following goals: Recognizing the nature and consequences of  
28 victimization; prioritizing the safety and well-being of victims; and  
29 recognizing the needs of special populations;

30 (b) Include content on the neurobiology of trauma and trauma-  
31 informed interviewing, counseling, investigative, and prosecution  
32 techniques;

33 (c) Offer participants an opportunity to practice interview and  
34 trial skills, including receiving feedback from instructors;

35 (d) Share best practices for communicating with victims  
36 throughout the criminal justice process;

37 (e) Include additional content relevant to and informed by best  
38 practices for improving outcomes in sexual assault prosecutions, as  
39 deemed appropriate by the commission;

1 (f) Take into account the training under RCW 43.101.272 in order  
2 to provide consistent and (~~complimentary~~) complementary training  
3 for investigators and prosecutors;

4 (g) Be designed to qualify for some continuing legal education  
5 credits through the Washington state bar association; and

6 (h) Be offered at least once per calendar year and be deployed in  
7 different locations across the state, or through some other broadly  
8 accessible means, in order to improve access to the training for  
9 prosecutors serving in small offices or rural areas.

10 **Sec. 4.** RCW 43.101.276 and 2023 c 197 s 4 and 2023 c 168 s 4 are  
11 each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

12 (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this  
13 specific purpose, the commission shall develop two curricula for  
14 peace officer training as follows:

15 (a) Training for peace officers working on patrol on a victim-  
16 centered, trauma-informed approach to interacting with victims and  
17 responding to calls involving (~~gender-based~~) sexual violence; and

18 (b) Training for peace officers on a victim-centered, trauma-  
19 informed approach to interacting with victims and responding to calls  
20 involving gender-based violence.

21 (2) The curriculum for both subsection (1)(a) and (b) of this  
22 section must: Be designed for deployment and use within individual  
23 law enforcement agencies; include features allowing for it to be used  
24 in different environments, which may include multimedia or video  
25 components; and allow for law enforcement agencies to host it in  
26 small segments at different times over several days or weeks,  
27 including roll calls. The training must include components on  
28 available resources for victims including, but not limited to,  
29 material on and references to community-based victim advocates.

30 (~~(2)~~) (3)(a) In developing the training for interacting with  
31 victims and responding to calls involving sexual violence, the  
32 commission shall seek advice from the Washington association of  
33 sheriffs and police chiefs, the Washington coalition of sexual  
34 assault programs, and experts on sexual assault (~~, gender-based~~  
35 violence,) and the neurobiology of trauma.

36 (~~(3)~~) (b) All peace officers working on patrol shall complete  
37 the training under subsection (1)(a) of this section within one year  
38 of patrol assignment and at least once every three years thereafter.

1       (4) (a) In developing the training for interacting with victims  
2 and responding to calls involving gender-based violence, the  
3 commission shall seek advice from the Washington association of  
4 sheriffs and police chiefs and experts on gender-based violence and  
5 the neurobiology of trauma.

6       (b) All peace officers shall complete the training under  
7 subsection (1)(b) of this section at least once every three years.

8       ~~((4))~~ (5) With the exception of the state parks and recreation  
9 commission, the training requirements under this section do not apply  
10 to limited authority Washington law enforcement agencies as defined  
11 in RCW 10.93.020 whose authority does not include the investigation  
12 of sexual assaults or gender-based violence.

13       NEW SECTION. Sec. 5. This act takes effect July 1, 2026.

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