

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1800

As Reported By House Committee On:
Criminal Justice & Corrections

Title: An act relating to community involvement in stopping crime.

Brief Description: Assisting crime stoppers programs.

Sponsors: Representatives Delvin, Poulsen, Sheahan, Costa, Kessler, Dickerson, Blalock, Hatfield, Conway, Gombosky, Keiser, Cody, Morris, Ogden, Mason and McDonald.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Criminal Justice & Corrections: 2/21/97, 2/25/97 [DP].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Ballasiotes, Chairman; Benson, Vice Chairman; Koster, Vice Chairman; O'Brien, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Blalock; Cairnes; Delvin; Dickerson; Hickel; Mitchell; Robertson and Sullivan.

Staff: Yvonne Walker (786-7841).

Background: Crime Stoppers is a community-based program that joins law enforcement, the community, and the media in an alliance to generate public awareness and assistance to solving crimes. These programs, usually operated by local law enforcement agencies, televises profiles of offenders and offers awards to information leading to their arrest. In addition, crime stopper programs are host to a variety of crime prevention and diversion-type programs in area neighborhoods.

Summary of Bill: The Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED) may provide grants to local law enforcement agencies or local jurisdictions with crime stopper programs. The CTED will determine if any matching funds should be required. Twenty-five percent of the grants must be for training, public awareness, and establishing new programs. The grants must be used only for operating costs and not for rewards. Law enforcement agencies or local jurisdictions may not receive more than one grant during each biennium. The grant may be made either to start a program or expand an existing program.

The CTED must appoint an advisory council to periodically review the crime stopper programs, and report the program's progress to the Legislature by the first of January of each year.

A maximum of \$750,000 will be appropriated during the 1997-99 biennium to fund the Crime Stopper programs.

Appropriation: The sum of \$750,000 is appropriated for the biennium ending June 30, 1999 from the general fund to the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 11, 1997.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: Crime Stoppers is a vital component of the fight against crime and acts as an alternative way for local law enforcement agencies to receive information regarding felons wanted for arrest. No matter how well organized, equipped or energetic a law enforcement agency may be, it cannot function effectively without the cooperation and involvement of the community. Crime Stoppers, with the help of the Boy Scouts of America, has also been expanded to the juvenile population as a way to allow students to take action against victimization and crime.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Myrle Carner, Crime Stoppers (pro); Diana Russell, Crime Stoppers (pro); Shawn DeBoer, Crime Stoppers (pro); and Ron Conlin, Crime Stoppers (pro).