

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2965

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to designating special assistant attorneys general for the crime victims' compensation program.

Brief Description: Revising provisions for crime victims' compensation.

Sponsors: Representatives Ballasiotes, Costa, Hatfield, Linville and McDonald; by request of Department of Labor & Industries.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Criminal Justice & Corrections: 2/4/98, 2/4/98 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/10/98, 96-0.

Passed Legislature.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Ballasiotes, Chairman; Benson, Vice Chairman; Koster, Vice Chairman; O'Brien, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Cairnes; Dickerson; Hickel; McCune; Mitchell and Sullivan.

Staff: Yvonne Walker (786-7841).

Background: The Crime Victims Act of 1973 established Washington's Crime Victims' Compensation Program (CVCP) to provide benefits to innocent victims of criminal acts. The Department of Labor and Industries was assigned authority for administering the program because benefits available to crime victims under this program were originally based on benefits paid to injured workers under the Industrial Insurance Act.

Benefits under CVCP include medical and mental health costs, disability payments and benefits for survivors of deceased victims. All benefits are paid secondary to available insurance resources of the victim.

The Industrial Insurance Program uses private attorneys appointed by the Office of the Attorney General in making recoveries for costs incurred by the department and injured

workers due to the liability of third parties. Currently, the CVCP does not have a similar program to help recover money from convicted offenders and third parties.

Summary of Bill: The Crime Victims' Compensation Program is authorized to designate private attorneys as special assistant attorneys general to pursue civil legal actions against criminal offenders and third parties for costs incurred by injured crime victims and the CVCP.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 30, 1998.

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

Testimony For: It has been suggested for some time that the Crime Victims' Compensation Program should use private attorneys appointed by the Office of the Attorney General to make recoveries and help pursue civil legal actions against criminal offenders and third parties for costs incurred by injured crime victims and the CVCP. Essentially, the attorneys would be working on behalf of the victims because a portion of the money collected from criminal offenders and third parties will eventually be passed on to them as well as the administrative costs of the Crime Victims' Compensation Program.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Cletus Nnanabu and Brian Husby, Department of Labor and Industries (Pro).