

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## HB 1589

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Law & Justice, April 3, 1997

**Title:** An act relating to crime victim rights.

**Brief Description:** Allowing a crime victim to have an advocate present at any judicial proceeding.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Robertson, Costa, Radcliff, Cody, Scott, Cole, Skinner, Lantz, Constantine, Delvin, K. Schmidt, Murray, Hankins, Blalock, Hatfield, Wensman, O'Brien, Linville, Cooke, Ogden, Sheldon, Kessler and Kenney.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Law & Justice: 3/24/97, 4/3/97 [DPA].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Roach, Chair; Johnson, Vice Chair; Goings, Hargrove, Kline, McCaslin, Stevens and Zarelli.

**Staff:** Martin Lovinger (786-7443)

**Background:** The Legislature has recognized not only the impact of crime on victims, survivors of victims, and witnesses of crime, but also the civic and moral duty of those individuals to fully and voluntarily cooperate with law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies.

Washington law provides that there must be a reasonable effort to ensure the right of a victim of a violent or sex crime to have a crime victim advocate present at any prosecutorial or defense interview with the victim. A crime victim advocate is an advocate trained by a crime victim advocacy program.

The right to have an advocate present applies if the presiding judge determines that it is practical and would not cause an unnecessary delay in the investigation or prosecution of the case. The role of the advocate is to provide emotional support to the victim.

**Summary of Amended Bill:** The proceedings at which a crime victim advocate's presence may be allowed are expanded to include any judicial proceeding related to criminal acts committed against the victim of a violent or sex crime.

**Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill:** The original bill contained an emergency clause.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For:** Victims establish emotional bonds with their advocates. This bill clarifies that the advocates are allowed to attend all related judicial proceedings in order to provide the victims with emotional support throughout this painful and traumatic process.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Representative Robertson, prime sponsor (pro); Mark Panitch, Parents of Murdered Children (pro).