

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6145

As Passed Senate, February 11, 1998

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: Senators Roach, Kline and Strannigan; by request of Department of Labor & Industries.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Law & Justice: 1/20/98, 1/22/98 [DP].
Passed Senate, 2/11/98, 44-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Roach, Chair; Johnson, Vice Chair; Fairley, Goings, Long, McCaslin, Stevens and Thibaudeau.

Staff: Dick Armstrong (786-7460)

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 administers the program. Benefits available to crime victims are 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 Attorney General's office, in making recoveries for costs incurred by the department and injured workers due to the liability of third parties. It is suggested that a similar program for CVCP would help to 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: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This bill will allow the crime victim's program to obtain additional revenue for the program by hiring private attorneys as special assistant attorney generals. Often victims cannot afford to pursue a civil cause of action, and this bill will remedy the situation and also hold offenders accountable.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Cletus Nnanabu, Brian Husby, L&I Crime Victim Program.