

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1403

As Reported By House Committee On:

Local Government

Title: An act relating to financial assistance to cities, towns, and counties for the investigation of extraordinary crimes.

Brief Description: Providing financial assistance to local governments for investigating extraordinary crimes.

Sponsors: Representatives Sheahan, Schindler, McDonald and Lantz.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Local Government: 2/11/99, 2/22/99 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes the Attorney General to financially assist local governments to investigate extraordinary crimes.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Mulliken, Republican Co-Chair; Scott, Democratic Co-Chair; Doumit, Democratic Vice Chair; Mielke, Republican Vice Chair; Edwards; Ericksen; Fisher and Fortunato.

Staff: Caroleen Dineen (786-7156).

Background:

The Washington Attorney General represents the state in all cases in which the state is interested and prosecutes and defends cases on the state's behalf. In certain circumstances and upon request of the Governor, the Attorney General may investigate crimes and assume criminal prosecution responsibilities from county prosecuting attorneys.

State statutes specify activities which constitute crimes and categorizes such activities into various classifications of crimes. Local governments establish local law enforcement agencies (e.g., county sheriff and city police) to provide law enforcement and to investigate crimes.

Summary of Bill:

Upon written request, the Attorney General is authorized to provide financial assistance to a local law enforcement agency for the investigation of extraordinary crimes. The financial assistance may include reimbursement of local law enforcement officers' salaries incurred in extraordinary crimes investigations. This financial assistance from the Attorney General is subject to available funds.

In reviewing a request for assistance, the Attorney General may consider factors such as the nature of the crime, the cost of the investigation, and the local law enforcement agency's ability to carry the investigation costs.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This bill will help jurisdictions overburdened financially with long and complex criminal investigations. Spokane has experienced this problem with a serial killer investigation and other cases. This bill is fiscally responsible, as the assistance authorized in this bill is subject to available funds.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Schindler (sponsor).