

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5108

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Human Services & Corrections, February 2, 1999
Ways & Means, March 5, 1999

Title: An act relating to missing and exploited children.

Brief Description: Creating a task force on missing and exploited children.

Sponsors: Senators Patterson, Johnson, Eide, Rossi, Prentice, T. Sheldon, Winsley, McAuliffe, Oke, Kohl-Welles and Costa; by request of Lieutenant Governor.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services & Corrections: 1/26/99, 2/2/99 [DPS].
Ways & Means: 2/15/99 3/5/99 [DP2S, DNPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5108 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Hargrove, Chair; Costa, Vice Chair; Franklin, Kohl-Welles, Long, Patterson, Sheahan and Stevens.

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 5108 be substituted therefor, and the second substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Loveland, Chair; Bauer, Vice Chair; Brown, Vice Chair; Fairley, Fraser, Kline, Kohl-Welles, Rasmussen, Roach, Rossi, B. Sheldon, Snyder, Spanel, Thibaudeau, Winsley, Wojahn and Zarelli.

Minority Report: Do not pass substitute.

Signed by Senator West.

Staff: Bryon Moore (786-7726)

Background: Juveniles are reported missing for many reasons including running away, abduction by strangers, or custodial interference. Washington ranks 12th in the nation for active missing children cases on any given day. Compounding the problem is the fact that these cases can present very complex issues and fact patterns. Responding law enforcement personnel often find themselves ill prepared to deal with these cases in terms of training and resources. It has been suggested that a multi-agency task force should be formed to assist local law enforcement agencies investigating specific missing children cases.

Summary of Second Substitute Bill: A task force on missing and exploited children is established and housed in the Washington State Patrol under the direction of the chief. Upon request, the task force may provide direct assistance and case management, technical assistance, personnel training, referral for assistance, and coordination and information sharing. By December 1, 2001, and annually thereafter, the chief must submit a performance report to the Legislature.

Wherever feasible, existing facilities and resources must be used. The Chief of the State Patrol must seek public and private grants to support the task force.

A six-member advisory board is established to advise the chief on the objectives, conduct, management, and coordination of task force activities. Five members are appointed by the chief and the sixth member is appointed by the Attorney General. Board members serve two-year terms.

Second Substitute Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: The provision authorizing the public safety and education account to be used for task force on missing and exploited children is removed. Additionally, the unspecified appropriation from the public safety and education account is removed.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Interstate cooperation and coordination by the task force is authorized. "Exploited children" is defined. This bill is named the Teekah Lewis Act.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Smaller jurisdictions cannot afford the specialized training and personnel required to investigate complex missing child cases. Criminals are using technology to exploit children; law enforcement needs the same expertise. Without interagency cooperation, success is just a matter of chance. Quick access to information and interagency cooperation at airports is imperative to avoid delays in reunification. It is important to make the statement that this kind of crime will not be tolerated.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Lt. Governor Brad Owen; Steve Wrybark, Michael Frank, Mason County Sheriff's Office; Brad Wilson, Anthony Anderson, Port of Seattle Police Dept.; Michael Crooks, Seattle Police Dept.; Capt. Eric Robertson, Susan Wagner, WSP; Suzanne Brown, Wash. Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs; Phillip Czapiewski..