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HOUSE BILL 1692

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State of Washington

56th Legislature

1999 Regular Session

By Representatives Kagi, Tokuda, Boldt, Edmonds, Dickerson, Talcott, Kastama, Lovick, Wood, Kenney, Schual-Berke, Eickmeyer, Ogden, Santos, Mitchell, Bush and Stensen

Read first time 03/01/1999.

1 AN ACT Relating to investigations involving children as witnesses  
2 and victims; amending RCW 74.14B.010; adding a new section to chapter  
3 43.101 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 26.44 RCW; adding a new  
4 section to chapter 43.20A RCW; creating a new section; and making  
5 appropriations.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The state of Washington affirms the  
8 importance of ensuring that crimes involving child abuse are  
9 investigated thoroughly and objectively. Children who have been  
10 victims of crime deserve to have those who committed the crimes against  
11 them brought to justice. Those who may have been accused should expect  
12 that investigative agencies will make every effort to conduct thorough  
13 and impartial investigations.

14 The best approach to investigations of child abuse crimes involves  
15 a coordinated effort by investigative agencies that minimizes  
16 repetitive investigative interviews and improves the quality of the  
17 investigations. Specialized training for child interviewers should be  
18 available throughout the state of Washington.

1        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 43.101 RCW  
2 to read as follows:

3        Investigative interviewers shall receive introductory and ongoing  
4 specialized training in interviewing children. Specialized training  
5 shall be prioritized for persons primarily responsible for  
6 investigating child abuse. Such training shall include information  
7 about developmental considerations in language and communication  
8 abilities, the nature and consequences of victimization that may affect  
9 willingness and ability to report crime, memory and suggestibility,  
10 methods and techniques for eliciting accurate and complete information,  
11 and methods and techniques for preserving interviews. Training  
12 participants shall have the opportunity to practice interview skills  
13 and receive feedback from instructors. The commission, the department  
14 of social and health services, and the Washington association of  
15 prosecuting attorneys shall design and implement state-wide training  
16 that contains consistent elements for persons engaged in the  
17 interviewing of children, including law enforcement, prosecution, and  
18 child protective services.

19        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 26.44 RCW  
20 to read as follows:

21        (1) The department and the criminal justice training commission  
22 shall develop written protocols for establishing multidisciplinary  
23 investigations. The protocols shall include interviewing techniques  
24 and procedures for recording interviews.

25        (2) Each agency involved in investigating child abuse shall  
26 document its role in handling cases and how it will coordinate with  
27 other local agencies or systems. The department and local law  
28 enforcement agencies may include other agencies and systems that are  
29 involved with child abuse victims in the multidisciplinary  
30 coordination.

31        **Sec. 4.** RCW 74.14B.010 and 1987 c 503 s 8 are each amended to read  
32 as follows:

33        (1) Caseworkers employed in children services shall meet minimum  
34 standards established by the department of social and health services.  
35 Comprehensive training for caseworkers shall be completed before such  
36 caseworkers are assigned to case-carrying responsibilities without

1 direct supervision. Intermittent, part-time, and standby workers shall  
2 be subject to the same minimum standards and training.

3 (2) Caseworkers who investigate child abuse shall receive  
4 introductory and ongoing specialized training in interviewing children.  
5 Such training shall include information about developmental  
6 considerations in language and communication abilities, the nature and  
7 consequences of victimization that may affect willingness and ability  
8 to report crime, memory and suggestibility, methods and techniques for  
9 eliciting accurate and complete information, and methods and techniques  
10 for preserving interviews. Training participants shall have the  
11 opportunity to practice interview skills and receive feedback from  
12 instructors. The department, the criminal justice training commission,  
13 and the Washington association of prosecuting attorneys shall design  
14 and implement state-wide training that contains consistent elements for  
15 persons engaged in the interviewing of children, including law  
16 enforcement, prosecution, and child protective services.

17 NEW SECTION. Sec. 5. A new section is added to chapter 43.20A RCW  
18 to read as follows:

19 The department shall establish three pilot projects involving child  
20 abuse and neglect investigations. The projects shall use different  
21 methods and techniques to conduct and preserve interviews with alleged  
22 child victims of abuse and neglect.

23 NEW SECTION. Sec. 6. (1) The sum of . . . . . dollars, or as  
24 much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for the fiscal year  
25 ending June 30, 2000, from the general fund to the criminal justice  
26 training commission for the purposes of this act.

27 (2) The sum of . . . . . dollars, or as much thereof as may be  
28 necessary, is appropriated for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2001,  
29 from the general fund to the criminal justice training commission for  
30 the purposes of this act.

31 NEW SECTION. Sec. 7. (1) The sum of . . . . . dollars, or as  
32 much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for the fiscal year  
33 ending June 30, 2000, from the general fund to the department of social  
34 and health services for the purposes of this act.

35 (2) The sum of . . . . . dollars, or as much thereof as may be  
36 necessary, is appropriated for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2001,

- 1 from the general fund to the department of social and health services
- 2 for the purposes of this act.

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