
SECOND SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6141

State of Washington

56th Legislature

2000 Regular Session

By Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Fairley, Fraser, Costa, Kline and Kohl-Welles)

Read first time 02/08/2000. Referred to Committee on .

1 AN ACT Relating to reporting of domestic violence against
2 applicants and recipients of temporary assistance for needy families;
3 adding new sections to chapter 74.08A RCW; and creating a new section.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that the personal
6 responsibility and work opportunity reconciliation act of 1996, known
7 as the federal welfare reform law, placed a major emphasis on the
8 concept of personal responsibility for welfare recipients. The
9 legislature finds that the state, as a partner in welfare reform, also
10 has a major responsibility to help those in need who are applicants or
11 recipients of temporary assistance for needy families. The state's
12 responsibility includes the timely assessment and identification of
13 applicants or recipients who are presently the victims of domestic
14 violence, in order to refer them for appropriate help or treatment, and
15 in order to promote their safety and well-being by avoiding
16 inappropriate work activity assignments that may place the victims at
17 increased risk.

18 The legislature intends that the caseworkers, social workers, case
19 managers, those performing client assessments, and job service

1 specialists who come into direct contact with applicants or recipients
2 of temporary assistance for needy families will be trained to identify
3 and assist domestic violence victims.

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The department shall develop screening
5 procedures for identifying victims of domestic violence and monitor
6 compliance with such procedures by its employees, contractors, and
7 subcontractors. Such procedures shall include universal notification
8 to all applicants and recipients of temporary assistance for needy
9 families and state family assistance of the following:

10 (a) Availability of supportive services;

11 (b) Options for exemption or deferral of program requirements that
12 make it more difficult for applicants or recipients to escape from
13 domestic violence or unfairly penalize them for being victims of
14 domestic violence;

15 (c) Procedures for obtaining supportive services or applying for
16 exemptions or deferrals; and

17 (d) Procedures for voluntary and confidential disclosure of
18 eligibility by the client for referrals to supportive services and
19 deferral of program requirements.

20 (2) Notification shall be given in writing and orally at the time
21 of application. Domestic violence screening procedures shall also
22 include indicators of the risk of domestic violence for use by the
23 department's employees, contractors, and subcontractors during all
24 interactions with applicants and recipients. The domestic violence
25 screening procedures shall also include a procedure to review confirmed
26 cases of domestic violence involving recipients in order to develop
27 better ways to identify and successfully respond to the risk of
28 domestic violence as early as possible. Notification procedures allow
29 applicants and recipients to voluntarily and confidentially disclose
30 their eligibility for services or deferral at any time. At no time may
31 an applicant or recipient's decision not to disclose eligibility for
32 services, exemptions, or deferrals preclude disclosure at a later date,
33 nor may it preclude future access to services, exemptions, or
34 deferrals.

35 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** The department shall monitor compliance with
36 departmental procedures contained in section 2 of this act by
37 department employees, contractors, and subcontractors, to ensure that

1 any information regarding any applicant or recipient of temporary
2 assistance for needy families who claims to be a past or present victim
3 of domestic violence or an individual at risk of future domestic
4 violence, whether provided by the victim or by a third party, shall
5 remain confidential. This information shall be used by the department
6 solely for the purpose of referral to services under section 4 of this
7 act or determining eligibility for deferrals of program requirements.
8 Information regarding victims of domestic violence or anyone who claims
9 to be a victim of domestic violence shall not be released to any
10 outside party or parties or other governmental agencies unless the
11 information is required to be disclosed by law or unless authorized in
12 writing by the applicant or recipient. This includes, but is not
13 limited to information on the applicant or recipient's current address,
14 workplace, or work placement, that the individual has been identified
15 as the victim of domestic violence, or any details concerning the
16 domestic violence.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** The department shall develop and monitor
18 compliance with procedures for the department and its employees,
19 contractors, and subcontractors for referring victims of domestic
20 violence to appropriate services. Whenever an applicant or recipient
21 of temporary assistance for needy families or state family assistance
22 self-identifies, or is otherwise identified, as a past or present
23 victim of domestic violence or a person at risk of future domestic
24 violence, the department shall refer that individual to an employee
25 trained in domestic violence issues who will provide information about
26 how to contact existing local services. Services may include but are
27 not limited to: Shelters for battered individuals, medical services,
28 domestic abuse hotlines, emergency aid for individuals fleeing domestic
29 violence, legal counseling and advocacy, law enforcement, mental health
30 care, counseling, support groups, and financial assistance for victims
31 of crime.

32 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** Nothing in sections 2 through 4 of this act
33 may be interpreted as requiring any action by a domestic violence
34 victim such as seeking an order of protection, attending counseling, or
35 other actions not required of other applicants or recipients.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** The department of social and health services
2 and the employment security department shall provide or contract to
3 provide specialized training in culturally competent identification and
4 appropriate assistance of domestic violence victims. Training shall
5 include, at a minimum, the need for safety and confidentiality, the
6 identification of patterns and cycles of abuse, and awareness of local
7 and regional resources for legal assistance, counseling, and safe house
8 organizations.

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** Sections 2 through 6 of this act are each
10 added to chapter 74.08A RCW.

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