

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1546

As Reported by House Committee On:
State Government

Title: An act relating to address confidentiality for victims of stalking.

Brief Description: Authorizing address confidentiality for victims of stalking.

Sponsors: Representatives Schual-Berke, Campbell, Ballasiotes, D. Schmidt, Simpson, Conway, Keiser, Darneille, Kagi, Woods, Ruderman, Hurst and McIntire; by request of Secretary of State.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government: 2/14/01, 2/19/01 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Adds victims of stalking to the list of victims eligible for the address confidentiality program administered by the Secretary of State.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives McMorris, Republican Co-Chair; Romero, Democratic Co-Chair; Miloscia, Democratic Vice Chair; Haigh, Lambert, McDermott and D. Schmidt.

Staff: Catherine Blinn (786-7114).

Background:

Victims of domestic violence or sexual assault may apply to the Secretary of State to have an alternative address designated as the persons' address. This allows state and local agencies to comply with requests for public records without disclosing the confidential location of a victim of domestic violence or sexual assault. The application must include a sworn statement from the applicant that he or she is a victim of domestic violence or sexual assault and fears for his or her safety, a designation of the Secretary of State as an agent, a mailing address and phone number where the applicant can be contacted by the Secretary of State, a new address that the applicant requests to remain confidential, and a

signature. Applicants are certified as program participants for four years, subject to renewal, withdrawal, or invalidation. State, local, and non-profit agencies that provide counseling and shelter services to victims of domestic violence or sexual assault may assist in the application process.

Summary of Bill:

Victims of stalking are added to the list of victims eligible for the confidentiality program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: The address confidentiality program prevents stalkers from tracking down victims through government records. This bill would allow victims of stalking to participate in an established program that has proven it works well. Though the program does not impact a large number of people, it has a significant and positive impact on participants. Stalking is frequently the first step of more serious, escalating crimes. The Office of the Secretary of State is not requesting any additional funding.

(In support with concerns) The address confidentiality program has worked admirably for business, the public, and participants. However, there are concerns with how county auditors respond when participants attempt to vote.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Schaul-Berke, prime sponsor; Margaret McKinney, Office of the Secretary of State; Suzanne Brown, Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs; and Bev Emery, Office of Crime Victims Advocacy.

(With concerns) Rowland Thompson, Allied Daily Newspapers.