
Judiciary Committee

HB 1174

Title: An act relating to trafficking.

Brief Description: Requiring assistant attorneys general to study trafficking issues.

Sponsors: Representatives Veloria, Lantz, Kenney and McMahan.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Provides that the Attorney General must require assistant attorneys general to study trafficking issues to develop a better understanding and expertise on trafficking issues.

Hearing Date: 1/31/03

Staff: Edie Adams (786-7180).

Background:

In 2002 the Legislature established the Washington State Task Force Against the Trafficking of Persons. The Legislature directed the Task Force to carry out three activities:

- Measure and evaluate the progress of the state in trafficking prevention;
- Identify programs that provide services to victims of trafficking; and
- Make recommendations on methods to provide a coordinated system of support and assistance to persons who are victims of trafficking.

The Task Force meet over the 2002 interim and issued a report on the work and recommendations of the Task Force in November, 2002. The recommendations of the Task Force were divided into three categories: policy recommendations, service recommendations and training and education recommendations. The training and education recommendations of the Task Force include the recommendation that assistant attorneys general develop expertise in trafficking issues, especially those assistant attorneys general assigned to the Department of Social and Health Services.

Summary of Bill:

Legislative findings are made, including that:

- Trafficking in people is a modern form of slavery that affects 700,000 people annually, 50,000 of whom are trafficked into the United States;
- Victims of trafficking are forced through physical violence to subject to the international sex trade or forced labor;
- Traffickers primarily target women and girls who are more vulnerable because of a lack of access to education, employment and other economic opportunities in their countries of origin; and
- Recognizing that trafficking is a serious offense is necessary and is accomplished through prioritizing the punishment of trafficking offenses, developing expertise on issues of trafficking and protecting trafficking victims.

The Attorney General must require assistant attorneys general, especially those who have the Department of Social and Health Services as a client, to develop a better understanding of trafficking issues by studying trafficking, the appropriate punishments, ways to give priority to trafficking offenses and ways to protect trafficking victims.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Preliminary fiscal note available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.