

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2596

As of February 24, 2010

Title: An act relating to defining child advocacy centers for the multidisciplinary investigation of child abuse and implementation of county protocols.

Brief Description: Defining child advocacy centers for the multidisciplinary investigation of child abuse and implementation of county protocols.

Sponsors: House Committee on Early Learning & Children's Services (originally sponsored by Representatives Williams, Chase, Upthegrove and Simpson).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/11/10, 97-0.

Committee Activity: Human Services & Corrections: 2/23/10.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Staff: Jennifer Strus (786-7316)

Background: The coordination of county-based protocols has been required for child sexual abuse investigations in Washington since 1999. Since 2007 county-based protocols have also been required for the investigation of child abuse, criminal child neglect, and child fatality.

Protocols are intended to coordinate a multidisciplinary investigation by the various local entities responsible for responding to the abuse, neglect, or death of children, including city and county law enforcement, child protective services, county prosecutors, emergency medical personnel, and other local agencies and advocacy groups. County prosecutors are responsible for developing the protocols in collaboration with all other entities.

The Children's Advocacy Centers of Washington (CACWA) is a membership association representing Children's Advocacy Centers (CAC) in the state, and providing training and technical assistance to existing and emerging CACs. The CACWA also is the Washington Chapter of the National Children's Alliance, a national membership and accrediting organization for CACs. As the state chapter of the national accrediting organization, the CACWA provides training and technical assistance to existing and developing centers, and serves as a voice and support for CACs.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The common goal of the CACs and the state chapter is to ensure children are not revictimized by the very system designed to protect them. Children's Advocacy Centers are located in the following Washington cities: Vancouver, Lacey, Montesano, Wenatchee, Tacoma, Spokane, Everett, Colville, Bellingham, Kennewick, and Port Orchard.

Summary of Bill: A CAC is defined as a child-focused facility in good standing with the CACWA providing coordination of a multidisciplinary process for the investigation, prosecution, and treatment of child abuse, including child sexual abuse. The CACs provide a child-friendly location for forensic interviews and help coordinate access to medical evaluations, advocacy, therapy, and case reviews within the context of the county-based protocols.

A community sexual assault program means that program as defined in RCW 70.125.030.

The CACs and community sexual assault programs are added to the list of entities to be included in the coordination and development of county-based protocols for the investigation of child sexual abuse, child abuse, criminal child neglect, and child fatalities. The list is updated to specify child protective services rather than the Department of Social and Health Services as a whole.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: None.

Persons Testifying: No one.