S-3005.2

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**SENATE BILL 6099**

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**State of Washington 64th Legislature 2015 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Padden, O'Ban, and Conway

AN ACT Relating to appointing a representative for a crime victim in certain circumstances; amending RCW 9.94A.500; creating a new section; and providing an effective date.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature finds that in 1978, Arlene Roberts was found dead in her home. She was the eighty year old victim of a brutal murder by asphyxiation by strangulation. In 2010, detective Scott Tompkins reviewed the case files and matched fingerprints from the scene to Ronald Wayne MacDonald. MacDonald pleaded guilty to reduced charges in exchange for a five-year suspended sentence. At sentencing, Detective Tompkins spoke as the representative of the victim and asked for the maximum sentence, which the court imposed. The Washington state supreme court in *State v. MacDonald*, Cause No. 89912-6 (April 9, 2015), reversed and remanded for further action by the sentencing court holding that RCW 9.94A.500 does not permit an investigating officer serving as a representative of the victim in court to make a recommendation that undermines a plea agreement.

The dissent in the case argued persuasively that a "crime victim has the basic and fundamental right ... to make a statement at sentencing" (Washington State Constitution, Article I, section 35.3). This right cannot be minimized on the basis that the victim of a brutal homicide is deceased. Instead, where the "victim is deceased ... the prosecuting attorney may identify a representative to appear to exercise the victim's rights." The dissent further noted that "[w]ith no family, friends, or estate to speak or request a victim representative, Detective Tompkins was the only person familiar with the horrific reality of the victim's death. Without Detective Tompkins, the victim would have had no one to speak on her behalf."

The legislature finds that in extremely narrow circumstances where the victim is deceased and has no estate or surviving family or any other representative, a prosecuting attorney shall be able to exercise his or her authority under Article I, section 35.3 to appoint an investigating officer to serve as the representative of the victim for the purposes of sentencing under RCW 9.94A.500. This act is intended to clarify and cure any ambiguity that might have led to the Washington state supreme court's decision in *State v. MacDonald*, Cause No. 89912-6 (April 9, 2015), and shall be applied retroactively.

**Sec.**  RCW 9.94A.500 and 2013 c 200 s 33 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Before imposing a sentence upon a defendant, the court shall conduct a sentencing hearing. The sentencing hearing shall be held within forty court days following conviction. Upon the motion of either party for good cause shown, or on its own motion, the court may extend the time period for conducting the sentencing hearing.

Except in cases where the defendant shall be sentenced to a term of total confinement for life without the possibility of release or, when authorized by RCW 10.95.030 for the crime of aggravated murder in the first degree, sentenced to death, the court may order the department to complete a risk assessment report. If available before sentencing, the report shall be provided to the court.

Unless specifically waived by the court, the court shall order the department to complete a chemical dependency screening report before imposing a sentence upon a defendant who has been convicted of a violation of the uniform controlled substances act under chapter 69.50 RCW, a criminal solicitation to commit such a violation under chapter 9A.28 RCW, or any felony where the court finds that the offender has a chemical dependency that has contributed to his or her offense. In addition, the court shall, at the time of plea or conviction, order the department to complete a presentence report before imposing a sentence upon a defendant who has been convicted of a felony sexual offense. The department of corrections shall give priority to presentence investigations for sexual offenders. If the court determines that the defendant may be a mentally ill person as defined in RCW 71.24.025, although the defendant has not established that at the time of the crime he or she lacked the capacity to commit the crime, was incompetent to commit the crime, or was insane at the time of the crime, the court shall order the department to complete a presentence report before imposing a sentence.

The court shall consider the risk assessment report and presentence reports, if any, including any victim impact statement and criminal history, and allow arguments from the prosecutor, the defense counsel, the offender, the victim, the survivor of the victim, or a representative of the victim or survivor, and an investigative law enforcement officer as to the sentence to be imposed. If the victim is deceased and has no estate or surviving family or any other representative, a prosecuting attorney may appoint an investigative law enforcement officer to serve as a representative of the victim. A law enforcement officer appointed as a representative of the victim may make a recommendation for a sentence different than that provided in a plea agreement.

A criminal history summary relating to the defendant from the prosecuting authority or from a state, federal, or foreign governmental agency shall be prima facie evidence of the existence and validity of the convictions listed therein. If the court is satisfied by a preponderance of the evidence that the defendant has a criminal history, the court shall specify the convictions it has found to exist. All of this information shall be part of the record. Copies of all risk assessment reports and presentence reports presented to the sentencing court and all written findings of facts and conclusions of law as to sentencing entered by the court shall be sent to the department by the clerk of the court at the conclusion of the sentencing and shall accompany the offender if the offender is committed to the custody of the department. Court clerks shall provide, without charge, certified copies of documents relating to criminal convictions requested by prosecuting attorneys.

(2) To prevent wrongful disclosure of information and records related to mental health services, as described in RCW 71.05.445 and 70.02.250, a court may take only those steps necessary during a sentencing hearing or any hearing in which the department presents information related to mental health services to the court. The steps may be taken on motion of the defendant, the prosecuting attorney, or on the court's own motion. The court may seal the portion of the record relating to information relating to mental health services, exclude the public from the hearing during presentation or discussion of information and records relating to mental health services, or grant other relief to achieve the result intended by this subsection, but nothing in this subsection shall be construed to prevent the subsequent release of information and records related to mental health services as authorized by RCW 71.05.445, 70.02.250, or 72.09.585. Any person who otherwise is permitted to attend any hearing pursuant to chapter 7.69 or 7.69A RCW shall not be excluded from the hearing solely because the department intends to disclose or discloses information related to mental health services.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  This act takes effect August 1, 2015.

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