
Early Learning & Human Services Committee

HB 1505

Brief Description: Allowing prosecutors to refer juveniles to restorative justice programs.

Sponsors: Representatives Goodman, Kagi, Appleton, Jenkins and Tharinger.

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Allows prosecutors, juvenile court probation counselors, or diversion units to refer certain juveniles to restorative justice programs.

Hearing Date: 2/3/15

Staff: Luke Wickham (786-7146).

Background:

Restorative Justice Generally.

Restorative justice is an approach to criminal justice that involves the victim, the offender, and the community to address an offender's actions.

Restorative Justice in Washington.

The Legislature passed Substitute House Bill 1775 in 2012 that created a definition of restorative justice in the Juvenile Justice Act and allows diversion units to refer juveniles to restorative justice programs as part of a diversion agreement or as part of counseling and releasing a juvenile.

Restorative justice is defined in statute as practices, policies, and programs informed by and sensitive to the needs of crime victims that are designed to encourage offenders to accept responsibility for repairing the harm caused by their offense by providing safe and supportive opportunities for voluntary participation and communication between the victim, the offender, their families, and relevant community members.

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.

A juvenile diversion agreement is a contract between a juvenile accused of an offense and a diversion unit where the juvenile agrees to do certain things instead of prosecution.

In some circumstances, a diversion unit may counsel and release a juvenile without requiring him or her to enter into a diversion agreement.

Summary of Bill:

Prosecutors, juvenile court probation counselors, or diversion units may refer juveniles to restorative justice programs, except when juveniles are alleged to have committed a sex offense or serious violent offense. These restorative justice programs are voluntary for victims.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 29, 2015.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.