

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5079

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Human Services, Mental Health & Housing, January 22, 2015

Title: An act relating to notifying the military regarding child abuse and neglect allegations of families with an active military status.

Brief Description: Requiring the department of social and health services to notify the military regarding child abuse and neglect allegations of families with an active military status.

Sponsors: Senators O'Ban, Conway and Dammeier.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services, Mental Health & Housing: 1/20/15, 1/22/15 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES, MENTAL HEALTH & HOUSING

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators O'Ban, Chair; Miloscia, Vice Chair; Darneille, Ranking Minority Member; Hargrove and Padden.

Staff: Alison Mendiola (786-7444)

Background: The Department of Defense (DOD) is required by law to coordinate with civilian child welfare agencies to obtain information regarding allegations of child abuse and neglect involving children in military families. Within DOD, the Family Advocacy Program addresses prevention of and response to child abuse and neglect involving such families. DOD policy requires military services to establish memorandum of understandings with state and local child protective services (CPS) to collaborate the oversight of child abuse and neglect cases involving military families.

It is estimated that 70 percent of active duty military families reside in the civilian community.

When CPS receives a report of an incident of alleged abuse or neglect involving a child who died or has a physical injury or injuries that are not accidental, or who was subjected to alleged sexual abuse, CPS must report the incident to the proper law enforcement agency.

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.

Summary of Bill: CPS must make efforts to determine the military status of parents whose children are subject to abuse or neglect allegations. Upon receiving an allegation of abuse or neglect that involves military parents or guardians, CPS must notify military law enforcement. If an allegation of abuse or neglect involving military parents or guardians is screened in and open for investigation, CPS must notify the DOD Family Advocacy Program.

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: PRO: DOD does currently have MOUs with CPS and those have been working well although there are instances of the chain of command not knowing about a case. This statute would provide consistency and prevent anyone from falling through the cracks. Washington is the sixth-largest military state in the country, and there are 55,000 military children here. Even if this bill helps only one child, that would be a success. Washington would be the first state to pass this legislation, setting a trend for the rest of the county.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator O'Ban, prime sponsor; Mark San Souci, DOD State Liaison Office.