

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5261

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Human Services, Mental Health & Housing, January 26, 2015

Title: An act relating to community policing at western state hospital and the surrounding areas.

Brief Description: Concerning community policing at and around western state hospital.

Sponsors: Senators O'Ban, Conway, Darneille and Chase.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services, Mental Health & Housing: 1/22/15, 1/26/15 [DPS-WM].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES, MENTAL HEALTH & HOUSING

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5261 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

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

Staff: Kevin Black (786-7747)

Background: Western State Hospital is a state psychiatric hospital located in the city of Lakewood, Washington.

A proviso in the 2013-15 operating budget provides \$231,000 of the state general fund for fiscal year 2014, and \$231,000 of the state general fund for fiscal year 2015, for a community partnership between Western State Hospital and the city of Lakewood to support community policing efforts in the Lakewood community surrounding Western State Hospital. These amounts are for the salaries, benefits, supplies, and equipment to sustain one full-time investigator, one full-time police officer, and one full-time community service officer at the city of Lakewood.

A similar proviso has been incorporated in the operating budget each fiscal year starting in the 2007-09 biennium for fiscal year 2008.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Substitute): Western State Hospital must enter into a contract with the city in which it is located for the provision of community policing services

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at the hospital and in the surrounding area. Community policing services includes, but is not limited to, a neighborhood patrol officer, community service officer, and detective or investigator to proactively address public safety issues at the hospital.

Beginning in fiscal biennium 2015-17, the amount of the contract must be no less than \$462,000. In each subsequent biennium, the contract must increase by 1 percent, but may never exceed \$750,000.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY HUMAN SERVICES, MENTAL HEALTH & HOUSING COMMITTEE (Recommended Substitute): A technical amendment clarifies the purpose of communications with the public in the community policing program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill: PRO: The public safety needs this bill would address are generated by the state hospital, so they should be paid for by the state. We need to be responsible, put this in statute, and make it permanent. We work collaboratively with Western State to help the staff and the community feel safe and be safe. The year-to-year approach for funding our community policing program is unpredictable and makes it challenging to employ and retain staff. We have absorbed all cost increases since 2008. Our local contribution is \$100,000 per year. This program has been proven to work. It can pay for itself by avoiding one liability claim. The burden of service to the state hospital is being absorbed by a small municipality of 60,000 people in a larger metropolitan area. The hospital presents unique challenges for law enforcement. We have a dedicated patrol and investigative resource, which provides us with a direct line of communication to the state hospital, without need for 911. Community outreach is another important component. With seven years of success of this program, calls for service at the hospital have dropped dramatically.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator O'Ban, prime sponsor; Don Anderson, mayor of Lakewood; Mike Zaro, Lakewood police.