

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5884

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Law & Justice, February 19, 2015

Title: An act relating to the trafficking of persons.

Brief Description: Concerning the trafficking of persons.

Sponsors: Senators Kohl-Welles, Darneille, Padden, Keiser, Conway, Chase and Hasegawa.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Law & Justice: 2/16/15, 2/19/15 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5884 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Padden, Chair; O'Ban, Vice Chair; Pedersen, Ranking Minority Member; Darneille, Kohl-Welles, Pearson and Roach.

Staff: Melissa Burke-Cain (786-7755)

Background: Washington uses a multi-faceted approach to reduce human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation. The criminal justice system pursues the criminals who profit from trafficking and holds them accountable. The social service, health care, and education systems support and care for trafficking victims and their families. Many nonprofit and community organizations across the state help trafficking victims with safe housing, transportation, and other necessities. State government has the challenging task of coordinating all of these efforts as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Social media and other emerging technologies serve an important purpose for the criminals in the business of sexual exploitation. Technology helps lure victims into the sex trade, and helps market the services to commercial sex consumers. The same technologies can help communities fight back through public education and by making resources available online to trafficking victims.

Currently Washington has a commercially sexually exploited children coordinating committee. The committee sunsets on June 30, 2015. Until June 30, 2004, Washington had a task force against human trafficking. The state's anti-trafficking efforts will improve by re-

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establishing the human trafficking task force and re-authorizing the coordinating committee for children exploited in the sex trade.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Substitute): Information Clearinghouse. The Department of Commerce Office of Crime Victims Advocacy (OCVA) must create and maintain an information portal serving as the state government contact regarding human trafficking. The portal is known as the Washington State Clearinghouse on Human Trafficking. The clearinghouse must share and coordinate statewide efforts to combat the trafficking of persons. The clearinghouse must:

- coordinate information on all statewide human trafficking task forces;
- publish statewide task force reports;
- maintain a comprehensive resource directory for trafficking victims; and
- offer current, up-to-date state and federal news, legislative efforts, and information on human trafficking.

State Trafficking Task Force and Coordinating Committee. The OCVA must provide administrative support for the Washington State Task Force on the Trafficking of Persons (task force). This task force consists of 17 appointed representatives from public agencies and private organizations. The OCVA is authorized to add additional participants to the task force. The task force must:

- measure and evaluate progress in the state's trafficking prevention activities;
- identify local, state, and federal victims' services programs;
- recommend systematic improvements to coordinate victim support services; and
- report findings and recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature.

The commercially sexually exploited children statewide coordinating committee is authorized through June 30, 2017. The authorization continues the coordinating committee's current membership and duties.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY LAW & JUSTICE COMMITTEE (Recommended Substitute): The OCVA will coordinate and staff the Human Trafficking Task Force, and provide a website, clearinghouse, and single state point of contact on human trafficking issues. The Commercially Sexually Exploited Children Statewide Coordinating Committee will continue to work through June 30, 2017, when it will issue its report. The OCVA will also approve the design and content of a public service notice that will be placed in all businesses with public restrooms. The notices will be developed with participation and input from businesses and anti-trafficking advocacy groups. The Human Trafficking Task Force will be expanded to include the Attorney General, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the Director of the Agriculture along with a more diverse array of public and private anti-trafficking organizations to provide diverse stakeholder input.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: Yes.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill: PRO: The OCVA will create a single point of contact for the state on human trafficking issues and provide a clearinghouse for information. The Commercially Sexually Exploited Children Statewide Coordinating Committee (CSECSCC) is not finished with all of its work and data analysis and should continue through June 30, 2017. The CSECSCC recommended that the state create a clearinghouse and a single point of contact with the state and a source of resources and information. The Center for Children & Youth Justice works to reform the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Within the Center, Project Respect coordinates the implementation of the Washington State Model Protocol for Commercially Sexually Exploited Children. Along with 200 partners across the state, the project is building a victim-centered response to commercial exploitation of children. Providing the CSECSCC an additional two years will better enable the important coordinating work to continue. By designating a central agency at OCVA to collect human trafficking related information, ongoing anti-trafficking efforts will be strengthened. It will help identify victims who are in critical need of support and services. It is important to recognize that human trafficking comes in many forms and often includes labor trafficking. This bill continues to support the work of many groups and grass root community participants. The committee does not just report, it analyzes the information and makes it broadly available to the public.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Kohl-Welles, prime sponsor; Rebecca Podszus, Office of the Attorney General; Lindsay Holmes, Shared Hope International; Savannah, Sex Workers Outreach Project; Rose Gundersen, WA Engage; Nicholas Oakley, Center for Children and Youth Justice.