

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1759

As Reported by House Committee On: Public Safety

Title: An act relating to procedures for communicating with crime victims and survivors of crime victims.

Brief Description: Addressing procedures for communicating with crime victims and survivors of crime victims.

Sponsors: Representatives Ortiz-Self, Orwall, Gregerson and Jinkins.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Public Safety: 2/6/17, 2/9/17 [DPS], 1/30/18 [DP2S].

Brief Summary of Second Substitute Bill

- Requires the Office of Crime Victims Advocacy to coordinate a work group to examine local practices for family notification in homicide cases and to make recommendations regarding provision of victim services information.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Majority Report: The second substitute bill be substituted therefor and the second substitute bill do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Goodman, Chair; Pellicciotti, Vice Chair; Klippert, Ranking Minority Member; Hayes, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appleton, Chapman, Griffey, Holy, Orwall, Pettigrew and Van Werven.

Staff: Omeara Harrington (786-7136).

Background:

The Office of Crime Victims Advocacy (OCVA) is a program of the Department of Commerce. The OCVA assists communities in planning and implementing services for crime victims, advocates on behalf of crime victims in obtaining needed services and resources, and advises the state and local governments on practices, policies, and priorities that impact

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crime victims. In addition, the OCVA administers grant programs for services to victims of crime and crime prevention activities.

The OCVA administers the Crime Victim Service Center program, which provides services to victims of crime and survivors of homicide victims. Advocates at crime victim service centers provide crisis intervention, information and referral services, and advocacy related to medical and legal needs. Some centers additionally provide support groups and mental-health related services.

A 24-hour Washington State Crime Victims Service Center Hotline provides crisis intervention and referral to local crime victim service centers. In addition, the Department of Commerce maintains a direct services line for referral to local crime victim services.

Summary of Second Substitute Bill:

The Department of Commerce, through the OCVA, must convene and coordinate a work group to examine practices around the state regarding notification of family members when a person has died from a suspected homicide or other criminal means, and to develop recommendations for providing crime victims and survivors of homicide victims with information about crime victim services. The work group must meet at least twice, in person, for a minimum of 8 hours.

The work group's membership must include: the OCVA; law enforcement; coroners and medical examiners; prosecutors; chaplain services; victim support services; and a private citizen who has been directly affected by the homicide of a family member. Persons who work directly with local victim notification processes in Whatcom, Snohomish, King, Franklin, Yakima, and Grant counties must be represented among the work group membership.

The work group must gather information regarding current processes around the state for family notification of a homicide or death by other criminal means, identify gaps in current local processes for family notification, and generate best practices for family notification. Best practices may include identification of:

- who is responsible in a local jurisdiction for providing notification;
- appropriate timelines for notification;
- alternative processes when a family member is suspected of causing the death;
- overcoming language barriers in the notification process;
- collaboration between law enforcement and victim services organizations; and
- other best practices identified by the work group.

The work group must additionally develop recommendations for ways in which law enforcement officers responding to the scene of a crime may provide crime victims and survivors of homicide victims with information about crime victim services.

A report summarizing the information collected by the work group and the work group's recommendations is due to the Governor and the appropriate committees of the Legislature by December 1, 2018.

Second Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The requirement for responding law enforcement officers to provide victims and survivors of victims with information about crime victim services is removed. Instead, the work group created in the bill must develop recommendations for ways in which responding officers may provide crime victims and survivors of homicide victims with information about crime victim services. The work group must report to the Legislature and the Governor by December 1, 2018, rather than December 1, 2017.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

See House Bill Report in the 2017 Legislative Session.

Persons Testifying:

See House Bill Report in the 2017 Legislative Session.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:

See House Bill Report in the 2017 Legislative Session.