

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1784

As Reported by House Committee On:
Early Learning & Human Services

Title: An act relating to creation of a certified child safety policy.

Brief Description: Concerning creation of a certified child safety policy.

Sponsors: Representatives Smith, Kagi, Hayes, Lytton and Macri.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Early Learning & Human Services: 2/15/17, 2/17/17 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Department of Health to contract with a nongovernmental organization to develop a certified child safety policy for youth recreational organizations.
- Establishes a five-county pilot program for local government youth recreational organizations in that region to establish and implement a certified child safety policy by December 1, 2018.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & HUMAN SERVICES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Kagi, Chair; Senn, Vice Chair; Dent, Ranking Minority Member; McDonald, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Frame, Goodman, Griffey, Kilduff, Klippert, Lovick, McCaslin, Muri and Ortiz-Self.

Staff: Dawn Eychaner (786-7135).

Background:

Sexual Abuse Prevention Guidance.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has published guidance for youth-serving organizations to use when developing policies and procedures to prevent child sexual

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abuse. The CDC guidance includes the following six key components of child sexual abuse prevention for organizations:

1. screening and selecting employees and volunteers;
2. guidelines on interactions between individuals;
3. monitoring behavior;
4. ensuring safe environments;
5. responding to inappropriate behavior, breaches in policy, and allegations and suspicions of child sexual abuse; and
6. training about child sexual abuse prevention.

Department of Health.

One of the stated purposes of the Department of Health (DOH) is to provide leadership and coordination in identifying and resolving public health threats by working with local health departments and local governments. The DOH also provides health information to the general public.

Youth Recreation Programs.

Local governments may operate or contract for the provision of community athletic and recreational programs for youth and adults. Private organizations also provide community-based athletic and recreational programs.

Summary of Bill:

The DOH must select and contract with a nongovernmental organization (contractor) with experience in reducing the likelihood of child sexual assault to develop a certified child safety policy (CCSP) for youth recreational organizations. Youth recreational organizations include any organization providing recreational programs to individuals under the age of 18, including private and local government organizations.

The CCSP must include the following minimum policy standards:

- screening and selecting employees and volunteers;
- guidelines on interactions between individuals;
- monitoring employee and participant behavior;
- ensuring safe environments;
- responding to inappropriate behavior, breaches in policy, and allegations; and
- training about child sexual abuse prevention as described by the CDC.

The CCSP minimum standards must be available on the DOH website by January 1, 2018. All youth recreational organizations are encouraged to work with the contractor to establish a CCSP.

Beginning July 1, 2018, the DOH must select a five-county pilot region in which to certify all local government youth recreational organizations. The pilot region must consist of five contiguous counties with a combined population between 1.2 million and 1.3 million residents. The DOH must collaborate with the contractor to ensure that all local government

youth recreational organizations in the pilot region have established and implemented a CCSP by December 1, 2018.

By December 15, 2018, the DOH must report to the Legislature on the pilot program, the CCSP requirements, and recommendations regarding implementing the CCSP in all youth recreation organizations statewide. The DOH must also consult with the Department of Early Learning to develop and include in the report recommendations for modifying and implementing a CCSP appropriate for child care providers.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This will create a baseline tool based on CDC best practices that can be used to prevent child sexual abuse. Every youth-serving organization wants to have a safe environment for children. One of the first organizations to adopt this type of policy is Rebound Washington, which established a demonstration project using the CDC framework. Now more than 30 organizations in Whatcom County have similar policies in place. All child advocacy centers are in support of this proposal.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Smith, prime sponsor; Byron Manering and Andrea Harrison, Brigid Collins Family Support Center; and Seth Dawson, Children's Advocacy Centers of Washington.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.