

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 2926

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Behavioral Health Subcommittee to Health & Long Term Care, February 27, 2020

Title: An act relating to expanding access to critical incident stress management programs.

Brief Description: Expanding access to critical incident stress management programs.

Sponsors: Representatives Maycumber, Blake, Kretz, MacEwen, Van Werven, Mosbrucker, Graham, Hoff, Griffey, Stokesbary, Chambers, Ybarra, Dent, Barkis, Goehner, Chandler, Kraft, Goodman, Lovick, Ortiz-Self, Senn, Gildon, Sells, Boehnke, Davis, Smith, Dye, Orwall, Eslick, Shewmake, Pollet, Riccelli and Harris.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/13/20, 97-0.

Committee Activity: Behavioral Health Subcommittee to Health & Long Term Care: 2/21/20, 2/27/20 [DP-WM].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC) to inventory critical incident stress management programs available to law enforcement agencies statewide.
- Requires WASPC to coordinate with others to expand access to critical incident stress management programs.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SUBCOMMITTEE TO HEALTH & LONG TERM CARE

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Dhingra, Chair; Wagoner, Ranking Member; Darneille, Frockt and O'Ban.

Staff: Kevin Black (786-7747)

Background: WASPC is a statewide independent organization consisting of executive and management personnel from law enforcement agencies. Membership includes sheriffs, police chiefs, the Washington State Patrol, the Department of Corrections, and representatives of a number of federal agencies.

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.

WASPC receives state funding to manage certain statewide programs, such as the Jail Booking and Reporting System. Additionally, it has been given administrative responsibility for several state-funded grant programs including: grant programs addressing gang crime; graffiti and tagging abatement; denied firearm purchase attempts; sexual assault kits; metal theft; and mental health field response.

Critical incidents generally involve an event that lies outside the range of usual human experience that have the potential to exhaust one's usual coping mechanisms, resulting in psychological distress and disruption of normal adaptive functioning. Critical incident stress management programs help to address issues of secondary traumatization and include but are not limited to: peer support counseling; crisis intervention; traumatic incident reduction; and stress management.

A peer support group counselor means, in the the context of a law enforcement agency, an employee of the agency that provides emotional or moral support and counseling to other law enforcement personnel relating to incidents encountered by the law enforcement officer while acting in an official capacity.

Summary of Bill: Subject to appropriation, WASPC must:

- conduct an inventory of current critical incident stress management programs in Washington;
- assess underserved agencies and regions;
- coordinate with law enforcement agencies, law enforcement organizations, and community partners to provide greater access to critical incident stress management programs, including peer support group counselors; and
- assist agencies with expanding such programs.

WASPC must submit a report to the Legislature and Governor on July 1, 2021, and July 1, 2022.

Appropriation: The bill contains a section or sections to limit implementation to the availability of amounts appropriated for that specific purpose.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The bill is a good complement to SSB 6570 (2020). Our officers have to help people through tragedies and not show how they are feeling. This bill will address officer health and wellness and position us to be a leader in the country in helping law enforcement officers. Officers are not immune from the emotional trauma of those they go to help. They respond to calls that are tragic and graphic and we expect them to respond to a noise complaint with the same level of respect and attention. More officers are lost each year by their own hands than by the hands of others. This bill gets our wellness better.

Persons Testifying: PRO: James McMahan, Washington Association of Sheriffs & Police Chiefs; John Snaza, Thurston County Sheriff; Michael Transue, Washington Chapter of the Fraternal Order of Police; Jeff DeVere, Washington Council of Police and Sheriffs (WACOPS).

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.