

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5945

As of February 21, 2019

Title: An act relating to creation of a pilot project to reduce youth gang involvement, crime, and violence in eastern Washington.

Brief Description: Creating a pilot project to reduce youth gang involvement, crime, and violence in eastern Washington.

Sponsors: Senators Warnick, Sheldon, King, Conway, Honeyford, Brown and Walsh.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services, Reentry & Rehabilitation: 2/20/19.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Appropriates \$1,448,000 for FY 2020 and \$1,448,000 for FY 2021 from the state general fund account to the Department of Commerce (Commerce) to provide a grant to building bridges east (grant recipient).
- Establishes policies, procedures, data collection, duties, and reporting timeframes and contents for Commerce and the grant recipient.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES, REENTRY & REHABILITATION

Staff: Keri Waterland (786-7490)

Background: In 1993, the Legislature enacted ESHB 1333 declaring the following:

1. The number of youth who are members and associates of gangs and commit gang violence has significantly increased throughout the entire greater Puget Sound, Spokane, and other areas of the state.
2. Youth gang violence has caused a tremendous strain on the progress of the communities impacted. The loss of life, property, and positive opportunity for growth caused by youth gang violence has reached intolerable levels. Increased youth gang activity has seriously strained the budgets of many local jurisdictions, as well as threatened the ability of the educational system to educate our youth.
3. Among youth gang members, the high school dropout rate is significantly higher than among nongang members. Since the economic future of our state depends on a highly educated and skilled workforce, this high school dropout rate threatens the

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economic welfare of our future workforce, as well as the future economic growth of our state.

4. The unemployment rate among youth gang members is higher than that among the general youth population. The unusual unemployment rate, lack of education and skills, and the increased criminal activity could significantly impact our future prison population.
5. Most youth gangs are subcultural. This implies that gangs provide the nurturing, discipline, and guidance to gang youth and potential gang youth generally provided by communities and other social systems. The subcultural designation means youth gang participation and violence can be effectively reduced in Washington communities and schools through the involvement of community, educational, criminal justice, and employment systems working in a unified manner with parents and individuals who have a firsthand knowledge of youth gangs and at-risk youth.
6. A strong unified effort among parents and community, educational, criminal justice, and employment systems would facilitate:
 - the learning process;
 - the control and reduction of gang violence;
 - the prevention of youth joining negative gangs; and
 - the intervention into youth gangs.

As a result of this declaration, the Legislature further intended to develop positive prevention and intervention pilot programs for elementary and secondary age youth through cooperation between individual schools, local organizations, and government, and if the prevention and intervention pilot programs were determined to be effective in reducing problems associated with youth gang violence, other counties in the state could be eligible to receive special state funding to establish similar positive prevention and intervention programs.

Commerce is the lead state agency charged with enhancing and promoting sustainable community and economic vitality in Washington. They administer grants and a portfolio of more than 100 programs and several state boards and commissions, all focused on helping communities achieve positive growth.

Commerce may recommend existing programs or contract with either school districts or community organizations, or both, through a request for proposal process for the development, administration, and implementation in the county of community-based gang risk prevention and intervention pilot programs.

Proposals by the school district for gang risk prevention and intervention pilot program grant funding shall last for two years. The school district or community organization proposal shall include the following:

1. A description of the program goals, activities, and curriculum. The description of the program goals shall include a list of measurable objectives for evaluation by Commerce. To the extent possible, proposals shall contain empirical data on current problems, such as dropout rates and occurrences of violence on and off campus by school-age individuals.
2. A description of the individual schools and geographic area to be affected by the program.

3. A demonstration of broad-based support for the program from business and community organizations.
4. A clear description of the experience, expertise, and other qualifications of the community organizations to conduct an effective prevention and intervention program in cooperation with a school or a group of schools.
5. A proposed budget for expenditure of the grant.

Grants awarded may not be used for the administrative costs of the school district or the individual school.

Gang risk prevention and intervention pilot programs shall include, but are not limited to:

- counseling for targeted at-risk students, parents, and families, individually and collectively;
- exposure to positive sports and cultural activities, promoting affiliations between youth and the local community;
- job training, which may include apprentice programs in coordination with local businesses, job skills development at the school, or information about vocational opportunities in the community;
- positive interaction with local law enforcement personnel;
- the use of local organizations to provide job search training skills;
- cultural awareness retreats;
- the use of specified state resources, as requested; and
- community service such as volunteerism and citizenship.

Summary of Bill: The Legislature shall make an appropriation totaling \$1,448,000 for FY 2020 and \$1,448,000 for FY 2021, or funding thereafter necessary, from the state general fund account for Commerce to provide a grant to the grant recipient to reduce youth gang involvement, crime, and violence in eastern Washington. The funding must be used to contract for operating the El Nuevo Camino pilot projects (pilot project) for Moses Lake, Mattawa, Quincy, Othello, Toppenish, Wapato, Zillah, western lower valley in Yakima county, Kennewick, Richland, and Pasco.

Commerce must adopt policies and procedures to administer the pilot project, and track compliance and outcomes.

The grant recipient must:

1. Provide antigang services in eastern Washington.
2. Pledge and provide a minimum of 30 percent of matching funds over the 2019-2021 biennium.
3. Establish a coordinated effort with committed partners, including law enforcement, prosecutors, mental health practitioners, and schools.
4. Demonstrate a clear plan to engage in long-term antigang efforts after the conclusion of the pilot project.
5. Work to reduce youth gang crime and violence by implementing the comprehensive gang model of the federal juvenile justice and delinquency prevention act of 1974.
6. Increase mental health services to unserved and underserved youth by implementing the best practice youth mental health model of the national center for mental health and juvenile justice.

7. Work to keep high-risk youth in school, reenroll dropouts, and improve academic performance and behavior by engaging in a grass roots team approach in schools with the most serious youth violence and mental health problems, which must include a unique and identified team in each district participating in the project.
8. Hire a project manager and quality assurance coordinator.
9. Adhere to recommended quality control standards for Washington State research-based juvenile offender programs as set forth by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy;
10. Provide mentoring services for ten juvenile rehabilitation parolees.
11. Report to Commerce by September 1, 2020, and September 1, 2021, the following:
 - the number of youth and adults served through the project and the types of services accessed and received;
 - the number of youth satisfactorily completing chemical dependency treatment in the county;
 - the number of youth satisfactorily completing mental health treatment in each county;
 - the estimated change in gang participation and gang violence;
 - the estimated change in dropout and graduation rates;
 - the estimated change in overall crime rates and crimes typical of gang activity;
 - the estimated change in recidivism for youth offenders in the county; and
 - other information required by Commerce or otherwise pertinent to the pilot project.

Commerce shall report the information listed above, as well as other relevant data, to the Governor and appropriate committees of the Legislature by October 1, 2020, and October 1, 2021.

Appropriation: The bill contains an appropriation totaling \$1,448,000 for FY 2020 and \$1,448,000 for FY 2021 from the state general fund account.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 18, 2019.

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: We would like to have this funded because of the large amount of gang involvement of youth in eastern Washington. This is a good bill that does cost but provides support and good services. The programs are currently running in two areas listed in the bill. Yakama Nation is not included in its entirety and we would like to be.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Judy Warnick, Prime Sponsor; Ron Hanna, Building the Bridges East; Dawn Vyvyan, Yakama Nation.

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