

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1501

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Human Services, March 21, 2023

Title: An act relating to authorizing additional counseling services for immediate family members of homicide victims.

Brief Description: Authorizing additional counseling services for immediate family members of homicide victims.

Sponsors: House Committee on Community Safety, Justice, & Reentry (originally sponsored by Representatives Steele, Caldier, Santos, Leavitt, Schmidt, Eslick, Orwall, Reeves and Graham).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/28/23, 97-0.

Committee Activity: Human Services: 3/13/23, 3/21/23 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows the Crime Victims Compensation Program to provide more than 12 counseling sessions to immediate family members of a homicide victim, under certain circumstances.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Wilson, C., Chair; Kauffman, Vice Chair; Boehnke, Ranking Member; Frame, Nguyen, Warnick and Wilson, J..

Staff: Kelsey-anne Fung (786-7479)

Background: Crime Victims Compensation Program. The Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) administers the Crime Victims Compensation Program (CVCP), which was created in 1989 to help victims with the many costs associated with violent crime.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

CVCP provides financial compensation to eligible crime victims for expenses such as medical or dental costs, lost wages, medication coverage, mental health treatment, grief counseling, and funeral expenses.

Immediate family members of a homicide victim may receive appropriate counseling to assist in dealing with the immediate, near-term consequences of the related effects of homicide. A person may receive up to 12 counseling sessions after their claim has been allowed. Fees for counseling must be determined by L&I, and payment of counseling benefits are prohibited for the perpetrator of the homicide.

Summary of Bill: Immediate family members of a homicide victim may receive more than 12 counseling sessions from CVCP if a licensed mental health provider determines that:

- additional sessions are needed as a direct result of the near-term consequences of the related effects of the homicide; and
- the recipient of the counseling would benefit from additional sessions.

Appropriation: None.

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: This bill is uncontroversial as it passed the House unanimously. There is no magic number or standard timeline for healing from grief and trauma. There will always be triggers and layers after a homicide trauma. More than 12 counseling sessions need to be allowed. This type of tragedy can happen to anyone at any time, and this bill will help future victims as they go through pain and suffering and heal from their grief.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Deana Knowlton; Andrew Ma.

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