

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5853

As of January 11, 2024

Title: An act relating to extending the crisis relief center model to provide behavioral health crisis services for minors.

Brief Description: Extending the crisis relief center model to provide behavioral health crisis services for minors.

Sponsors: Senators Dhingra, Wagoner, Frame, Hasegawa, Kuderer, Lovelett, Lovick, Muzzall, Nguyen, Nobles, Shewmake, Stanford, Torres, Valdez and Wilson, C..

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long Term Care: 1/11/24.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows 23-hour Crisis Relief Centers to serve minors, but not in the same facility as adults.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG TERM CARE

Staff: Kevin Black (786-7747)

Background: A 23-hour Crisis Relief Center (CRC) is a community-based behavioral health facility serving adults which offers access to mental health and substance use care for no more than 23 hours and 59 minutes at a time per patient. A CRC must be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week and accept behavioral health crisis walk-ins, drop-offs from first responders, and individuals referred through the 988 system, regardless of behavioral health acuity, and without requiring medical clearance.

23-hour CRCs were enacted into law in 2023 through 2SSB 5120. The Department of Health expects to finalize rulemaking for CRCs and start accepting license applications in May 2024.

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.

Summary of Bill: A CRC may serve minors, but may not serve adults and minors in the same facility.

A peace officer may take a minor to a CRC when the officer has reasonable cause to believe the minor is suffering from a mental disorder and presents an imminent likelihood of serious harm or is gravely disabled.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 9, 2024.

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: In the last six years we have been working on building capacity for services across the crisis continuum. This bill helps create a safe place to be. Seattle Children's has seen an increase in visits to the emergency departments related to behavioral health crises. Many don't need to come to the ED, but there is nowhere else to go. Expanding this model to minors is critically needed. This closes a gap. Youth deserve therapeutic spaces designed for behavioral health relief. Washington's behavioral health system is chronically under-resourced, especially for kids. We have amendment suggestions to support rulemaking that addresses special concerns of minors. A crisis center for minors offering observation and short-term stabilization fits well in the continuum. Kirkland is partnering with its surrounding cities to build a CRC. We have suggestions to make these facilities more flexible. Retail theft rings prey on vulnerable individuals and often recruit minors. We support treatment instead of jail. The needs of youth and adults are vastly different. Arizona facilities keep youth separated from the adults. An average of 2.6 Washington youth die by suicide every week. Over half of Washington youth experience depression and anxiety. As a teenager who has suffered from major depression I can say the disease affects kids in terrible ways.

CON: We feel this bill will promote diagnosing more childhood behaviors as mental illness. Pathologizing behavior leads to excessive prescription of psychiatric drugs.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Manka Dhingra, Prime Sponsor; Mark Johnson, Washington Retail Association; Neal Black, City of Kirkland; Anna Nepomuceno, NAMI Washington and Patients Coalition of Washington; Sarah Perry, King County; Kimberlee Hauff, Washington Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics; Katie Kolan, Washington State Hospital Association; Kashi Aurora, Seattle Children's Hospital; Dr. Jeff Eisen, Multicare; Beckett Leeson, Parth Parashar, citizens; Michael Transue, Connections Health Solutions.

CON: Steven Pearce, Citizens Commission on Human Rights.

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