
ENGROSSED SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6288

State of Washington

66th Legislature

2020 Regular Session

By Senate Law & Justice (originally sponsored by Senators Dhingra, Pedersen, Frockt, Carlyle, Wilson, C., Kuderer, Das, Hunt, Lovelett, Nguyen, and Saldaña)

READ FIRST TIME 01/24/20.

1 AN ACT Relating to the Washington office of firearm safety and
2 violence prevention; adding a new chapter to Title 43 RCW; and
3 creating a new section.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that firearm
6 violence is a significant public health and safety concern in
7 Washington. From 2014 to 2018, over one thousand people in Washington
8 were murdered and well over half of those victims were murdered with
9 a gun. Thousands more were hospitalized or treated in emergency
10 departments after surviving gunshot injuries. The legislature
11 recognizes that firearm violence in Washington disproportionately
12 impacts low-income communities and communities of color, with young
13 men of color being particularly vulnerable. This violence imposes a
14 high physical, emotional, and financial toll on families and
15 communities across the state. In Washington, the overall estimate of
16 the annual economic cost of gun violence is three billion eight
17 hundred million dollars.

18 The legislature recognizes that rates of suicide have been
19 growing in the United States as well as in the state of Washington.
20 Seventy-nine percent of all firearm deaths in Washington state are

1 suicides. More people die of suicide by firearm than by all other
2 means combined.

3 The legislature intends to establish the Washington office of
4 firearm safety and violence prevention to provide statewide
5 leadership, coordination, and technical assistance to promote
6 effective state and local efforts to reduce preventable injuries and
7 deaths from firearm violence. The office will work with government
8 entities, law enforcement agencies, community-based organizations,
9 and individuals through the state to develop evidence-based policies,
10 strategies, and interventions to reduce the impacts of firearm
11 violence in Washington's communities. The office will also administer
12 the Washington firearm violence intervention and prevention grant
13 program which will provide for intentional, coordinated, and
14 sustained investments in evidence-based violence reduction strategies
15 to reduce the human and financial costs of firearm violence and
16 enhance firearm safety.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The definitions in this section apply
18 throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires
19 otherwise.

20 (1) "Department" means the department of commerce.

21 (2) "Office" means the Washington office of firearm safety and
22 violence prevention.

23 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) The Washington office of firearm
24 safety and violence prevention is created within the department for
25 the purposes of coordinating and promoting effective state and local
26 efforts to reduce firearm violence.

27 (2) The duties of the office include, but are not limited to:

28 (a) Working with law enforcement agencies, county prosecutors,
29 researchers, and public health agencies throughout the state to
30 identify and improve upon available data sources, data collection
31 methods, and data-sharing mechanisms. The office will also identify
32 gaps in available data needed for ongoing analysis, policy
33 development, and the implementation of evidence-based firearm
34 violence intervention and prevention strategies;

35 (b) Researching, identifying, and recommending legislative policy
36 options to promote the implementation of statewide evidence-based
37 firearm violence intervention and prevention strategies;

1 (c) Researching, identifying, and applying for nonstate funding
2 to aid in the research, analysis, and implementation of statewide
3 firearm violence intervention and prevention strategies;

4 (d) Working with the office of crime victim advocacy to identify
5 opportunities to better support victims of firearm violence, a
6 population that is currently underrepresented among recipients of
7 victim services;

8 (e) Contract for a statewide helpline, counseling, and referral
9 services for victims, friends, and family members impacted by gun
10 violence and community professionals and providers who engage with
11 them;

12 (f) Contract with the University of Washington to develop a best
13 practice guide for therapy for gun violence victims;

14 (g) Administering the Washington firearm violence intervention
15 and prevention grant program as outlined in section 4 of this act.

16 (3) The office shall report to the appropriate legislative policy
17 committees by December 1st every odd-numbered year on its progress
18 and findings in analyzing data, developing strategies to prevent
19 firearm violence, and recommendations for additional legislative
20 policy options. The first report must be submitted by December 1,
21 2021.

22 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** Subject to the availability of amounts
23 appropriated for this specific purpose, the office shall contract
24 with a level one trauma center in the state of Washington to provide
25 a statewide helpline, counseling, and referral service for victims,
26 friends, and family members impacted by gun violence and community
27 professionals, legal practitioners, health providers, and others who
28 engage with them. The service must be developed in consultation with
29 the office of crime victims advocacy established in RCW 43.280.080,
30 and include the opportunity for brief clinical encounters, problem
31 solving, and referral to the best statewide resources available to
32 meet their needs. The service must become conversant with providers
33 across the state that are trained in evidence-based trauma therapy
34 and establish relationships to ensure specific knowledge of available
35 resources. The office of crime victims advocacy established in RCW
36 43.280.080 must provide consultation within existing resources.

37 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** The office shall contract with the
38 University of Washington department of psychiatry and behavioral

1 sciences to develop a best practice guide for therapy for gun
2 violence victims in collaboration with the Harborview center for
3 sexual assault and traumatic stress. The guide must summarize the
4 state of the knowledge in this area and provide recommendations for
5 areas of focus and action that are meaningful and practical for
6 different constituencies. The guide must be made available to the
7 public online and disseminated across the state to appropriate
8 entities including but not limited to medical examiner's offices,
9 prosecuting attorneys, level one and level two trauma centers, and
10 victim support organizations.

11 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** (1) The Washington firearm violence
12 intervention and prevention grant program is created to be
13 administered by the office. The purpose of the program is to improve
14 public health and safety by supporting effective firearm violence
15 reduction initiatives in communities that are disproportionately
16 affected by firearm violence including suicides.

17 (2) Program grants shall be used to support, expand, and
18 replicate evidence-based violence reduction initiatives, including
19 hospital-based violence intervention programs, evidence-based street
20 outreach programs, and focused deterrence strategies, that seek to
21 interrupt the cycles of violence, victimization, and retaliation in
22 order to reduce the incidence of firearm violence. These initiatives
23 must be primarily focused on providing violence intervention services
24 to the small segment of the population that is identified as having
25 the highest risk of perpetrating or being victimized by firearm
26 violence.

27 (3) Program grants shall be made on a competitive basis to cities
28 that are disproportionately impacted by violence, to law enforcement
29 agencies in those cities, and to community-based organizations that
30 serve the residents of those cities. Where appropriate, two or more
31 cities may submit joint applications to better address regional
32 problems.

33 (4) An applicant for a program grant shall submit a proposal, in
34 a form prescribed by the office, which must include, but not be
35 limited to, all of the following:

- 36 (a) Clearly defined and measurable objectives for the grant;
37 (b) A statement describing how the applicant proposes to use the
38 grant to implement an evidence-based firearm reduction initiative in
39 accordance with this section;

1 (c) A statement describing how the applicant proposes to use the
2 grant to enhance coordination of existing violence prevention and
3 intervention programs and minimize duplication of services; and

4 (d) Evidence indicating that the proposed firearm violence
5 reduction initiative would likely reduce the incidence of firearm
6 violence.

7 (5) In awarding program grants, the office shall give preference
8 to applicants whose grant proposals demonstrate the greatest
9 likelihood of reducing firearm violence in the applicant's community,
10 without contributing to mass incarceration.

11 (6) Each city that receives a program grant shall distribute no
12 less than fifty percent of the grant funds to one or more of any of
13 the following types of entities:

14 (a) Community-based organizations; and

15 (b) Public agencies or departments that are primarily dedicated
16 to community safety or firearm violence prevention.

17 (7) The office shall form a grant selection advisory committee
18 including, without limitation, persons who have been impacted by
19 violence, formerly incarcerated persons, and persons with direct
20 experience in implementing evidence-based violence reduction
21 initiatives, including initiatives that incorporate public health and
22 community-based approaches.

23 (8) Each grantee shall report to the office, in a form and at
24 intervals prescribed by the office, the grantee's progress in
25 achieving the grant objectives.

26 (9) The office may contract with an independent entity with
27 expertise in evaluating community-based grant-funded programs to
28 evaluate the grant program's effectiveness.

29 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** Sections 2 through 6 of this act
30 constitute a new chapter in Title 43 RCW.

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