
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 6572

AN ACT CONCERNING THE CREATION OF A STATE POLICE INVESTIGATIVE TASK FORCE TO ADDRESS ONLINE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE OF MINORS.

SUMMARY

This bill requires the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) to (1) establish a task force for FYs 24 and 25 to investigate online exploitation and sexual abuse of minors and (2) assign staff as needed to fulfill task force duties. Among other things, the task force must (1) investigate these crimes and arrest people who commit them and (2) compile and analyze related data.

By November 1, 2023, the bill requires the Police Officer Standards and Training Council (POST), in consultation with the DESPP commissioner, to develop (1) a standardized form or other reporting system for law enforcement to report to the task force, (2) best practices for information sharing between the task force and law enforcement units, (3) a model policy for investigating online exploitation and sexual abuse of minors, and (4) ways to inform the public on how to report these criminal activities.

The bill also requires law enforcement units, after receiving any information on this type of criminal activity, to report it to the investigative task force and continue to share information using the tools that POST develops, as described above.

Lastly, the bill requires DESPP to report annually on the task force's activity and results and recommend whether the task force should be extended. The reports must be submitted to the Children, Judiciary, and Public Safety and Security committees, by January 1, 2025, and January 1, 2026.

Under the bill, a “law enforcement unit” is any state or municipal agency or department (or tribal agency or department created and governed under a memorandum of agreement) whose primary functions include enforcing criminal or traffic laws; preserving public order; protecting life and property; or preventing, detecting, or investigating crime.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

INVESTIGATIVE TASK FORCE ON ONLINE EXPLOITATION AND SEXUAL ABUSE OF MINORS

Task Force Responsibilities

The task force must use existing resources and processes to:

1. investigate any suspected criminal activity that involves using the Internet to sexually abuse, exploit, or assault a minor online or in-person;
2. arrest anyone who commits or attempts to commit these crimes;
3. compile, monitor, and analyze related data; and
4. share data and information with any law enforcement unit to help investigate this type of criminal activity.

At the discretion of the head of the task force, who must be ranked sergeant or higher, the task force may also provide more help to law enforcement units.

POST’s Standardized Form, Best Practices, Policy, and Reporting

By November 1, 2023, the bill requires POST, in consultation with the DESPP commissioner, to develop the following:

1. a standardized form or other reporting system, which must be distributed to all law enforcement units to use when making an initial notification or report to the investigative task force as the bill requires (see below);
2. best practices to facilitate the continued sharing of information

among, and between, the investigative task force and law enforcement units; and

3. a model policy for the investigation of the online sexual exploitation and abuse of minors.

POST, by November 1, 2023, and in consultation with the DESPP commissioner, must also take any actions necessary to inform the public (1) of its right to report criminal activity or suspected criminal activity that uses the Internet to sexually abuse, exploit, or assault minors online or in-person and (2) how to make these reports, such as considering whether to establish state and municipal telephone hotlines and Internet websites.

Law Enforcement Units' Information Sharing

Under the bill, within 14 days after receiving notification, information, or a complaint of this criminal activity or suspected criminal activity, the law enforcement unit must notify and report to the investigative task force using the standardized form or other reporting system POST develops.

The bill also requires the law enforcement unit to continue to share investigation information with the task force following the best practices POST develops.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Committee on Children

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 19 Nay 0 (03/02/2023)