

**HB 2155 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY**

**Senate Committee On Human Services, Mental Health and Recovery**

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**Prepared By:** C. Ross, Counsel

**Meeting Dates:** 5/6

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**WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:**

Modifies definition of public or private official to clarify mandatory reporting exemption for victim assistance providers.

**ISSUES DISCUSSED:**

- Importance of safety and confidentiality for survivors, removing barriers to access services
- Clarification of existing law and inadvertent drafting error

**EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:**

No amendment.

**BACKGROUND:**

Public and private officials are required to inform the Department of Human Services (DHS) or law enforcement immediately if they reasonably suspect that a child they have come in contact with may have been abused. These individuals are called “mandatory reporters” and include law enforcement, social workers, medical and other treatment providers, school personnel, child care providers, foster care providers, legal professionals, and clergy members.

Certain nonprofit organizations that assist survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and trafficking are exempt from mandatory reporting requirements because confidentiality enhances the success of their programs and is sometimes necessary to protect the people they serve. However, when programs for domestic violence and sexual assault survivors are housed within nonprofits whose primary purpose is to offer a broader range of services to a community, it is not clear whether the mandatory reporting exemption applies.

House Bill 2155 clarifies that the mandatory reporting exemption for stand-alone domestic violence and sexual assault programs includes programs offered by larger organizations that have a broader purpose.