

SB 745 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Judiciary

Prepared By: Lucy Ohlsen, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 2/2

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires juvenile departments to screen youth taken into custody to determine if the youth is a victim of sex trafficking and to ensure appropriate resources, including access to a special advocate, be provided to any youth whose screening indicates they may be a victim of sex trafficking. Directs the Department of Justice to develop and provide training about sex trafficking to state agencies and county juvenile departments that work with youths. Takes effect on 91st day following adjournment sine die.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Public and private officials, including those working in the juvenile justice system, have a duty to report to the Department of Human Services if the official suspects that a youth has suffered abuse. However, when a youth is taken into custody pursuant to the Juvenile Delinquency Code, there is no specific requirement that a juvenile department assess whether the youth may be a victim of sex trafficking. In 2020, the Washington state legislature enacted a law requiring that specific services be offered to youth who are reasonably believed to be victims of sex trafficking.

Senate Bill 745 would require that, as soon as practicable after a youth is taken into custody, the juvenile department ensure the youth is screened to determine whether the youth is a victim of sex trafficking. The bill would require the Department of Justice to develop and provide training about sex trafficking to all state agencies and county juvenile departments that work with youth, and in turn, that all state agencies and juvenile departments ensure that their staff are appropriately trained. Senate Bill 745 would further require that, if a screening indicates that a youth is a victim of sex trafficking, the screener immediately make a report to the Department of Human Services, and the juvenile department ensure that appropriate resources, including access to a special advocate, be provided to the youth.