

SB 1550 -1 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Judiciary

Prepared By: Amie Fender-Sosa, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 2/2, 2/4

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs law enforcement, before making a finding as to the cause or manner of a death, to interview family members of the decedent regarding domestic violence or child abuse when certain conditions are present.

Detailed Summary:

The measure requires that if a decedent who is suspected to have died from suicide, overdose or accident has previously been identified as a victim of domestic violence or actual or suspected child abuse, and at least three of 11 listed conditions are met, law enforcement must interview family members of the decedent. If law enforcement determines it is reasonable to suspect the death of the decedent may be the result of domestic violence or child abuse, the measure requires law enforcement to request an autopsy from the district medical examiner. The measure directs the medical examiner to conduct an autopsy on the decedent when certain conditions are met.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 Removes the newly created term "partner" and replaces it with the established term "family or household member." Allows a medical-legal death examiner to submit for an autopsy in addition to an investigator or officer. Instead of directing an autopsy when the scene of the death suggests death by suicide overdose or accident, expands to suicide, accident or other undetermined cause. Adds language stating that if law enforcement and the medical examiner find that the death was not a homicide and close the case, then a family member may examine the case and obtain records related to the decedent's case.

BACKGROUND: