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HOUSE BILL 2407

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State of Washington

68th Legislature

2024 Regular Session

By Representatives Couture and Rule

1 AN ACT Relating to increasing protections for child welfare  
2 workers; amending RCW 74.14B.010; reenacting and amending RCW  
3 74.14B.005; and adding a new section to chapter 74.14B RCW.

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

5 **Sec. 1.** RCW 74.14B.005 and 2019 c 470 s 18 and 2019 c 64 s 26  
6 are each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

7 The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter  
8 unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

9 (1) "Child welfare worker" means an employee of the department  
10 whose job includes supporting or providing child welfare services as  
11 defined in RCW 74.13.020 or child protective services as defined in  
12 RCW 26.44.020.

13 (2) "Department" means the department of children, youth, and  
14 families.

15 ((+2)) (3) "Secretary" means the secretary of the department of  
16 children, youth, and families.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 74.14B  
18 RCW to read as follows:

19 (1) A child welfare worker who is required to respond to a  
20 private home or other private location to provide services to,

1 monitor, or investigate a family, may make a request to their  
2 supervisor to be accompanied by a second trained individual when the  
3 child welfare worker has concerns that violence could occur based on  
4 a family member's history of violence.

5 (2) When a request is made under subsection (1) of this section,  
6 the department shall arrange for a second trained individual to  
7 accompany the child welfare worker unless it is not possible to  
8 fulfill the request under the circumstances.

9 (3) The second trained individual that may accompany a child  
10 welfare worker under this section may be:

11 (a) A law enforcement officer;

12 (b) A mental health professional;

13 (c) A first responder, such as a firefighter or emergency medical  
14 personnel; or

15 (d) An employee of the department who is trained as a child  
16 welfare worker and acts in a supervisory capacity with respect to  
17 other child welfare workers.

18 (4) No retaliation may be taken against a child welfare worker  
19 for requesting that a second trained individual accompany them in  
20 providing services to, monitoring, or investigating a family.

21 **Sec. 3.** RCW 74.14B.010 and 2019 c 470 s 27 are each amended to  
22 read as follows:

23 (1) Child welfare workers shall meet minimum standards  
24 established by the department. Comprehensive training for child  
25 welfare workers shall be completed before such child welfare workers  
26 are assigned to case-carrying responsibilities as the sole worker  
27 assigned to a particular case. Intermittent, part-time, and standby  
28 child welfare workers shall be subject to the same minimum standards  
29 and training. The minimum training standards under this section must  
30 include training related to de-escalation strategies.

31 (2) Ongoing specialized training shall be provided for child  
32 welfare workers responsible for investigating child sexual abuse.  
33 Training participants shall have the opportunity to practice  
34 interview skills and receive feedback from instructors.

35 (3) The department, the criminal justice training commission, the  
36 Washington association of sheriffs and police chiefs, and the  
37 Washington association of prosecuting attorneys shall design and  
38 implement statewide training that contains consistent elements for

1 persons engaged in the interviewing of children, including law  
2 enforcement, prosecution, and child protective services.

3 (4) The training required by this section shall: (a) Be based on  
4 research-based practices and standards; (b) minimize the trauma of  
5 all persons who are interviewed during abuse investigations; (c)  
6 provide methods of reducing the number of investigative interviews  
7 necessary whenever possible; (d) assure, to the extent possible, that  
8 investigative interviews are thorough, objective, and complete; (e)  
9 recognize needs of special populations, such as persons with  
10 developmental disabilities; (f) recognize the nature and consequences  
11 of victimization; (g) require investigative interviews to be  
12 conducted in a manner most likely to permit the interviewed persons  
13 the maximum emotional comfort under the circumstances; (h) address  
14 record retention and retrieval; (i) address documentation of  
15 investigative interviews; and (j) include self-care for child welfare  
16 workers.

17 (5) The identification of domestic violence is critical in  
18 ensuring the safety of children in the child welfare system. It is  
19 also critical for child welfare workers to support victims of  
20 domestic violence while victims continue to care for their children,  
21 when possible, as domestic violence perpetrated against someone other  
22 than the child does not constitute negligent treatment or  
23 maltreatment in and of itself as provided in RCW 26.44.020. For these  
24 reasons, ongoing domestic violence training and consultation shall be  
25 provided to child welfare workers, including how to use the  
26 department's practice guide to domestic violence.

27 (6) By January 1, 2021, the department shall:

28 (a) Develop and implement an evidence-informed curriculum for  
29 supervisors providing support to child welfare workers to better  
30 prepare candidates for effective supervisory and leadership roles  
31 within the department;

32 (b) Develop specialized training for child welfare workers that  
33 includes simulation and coaching designed to improve clinical and  
34 analytical skills;

35 ~~((Based on the report required under RCW 43.216.7501(3),~~  
36 ~~develop)) Develop and implement training for child welfare workers  
37 that incorporates trauma-informed care and reflective supervision  
38 principles.~~

39 ~~((For purposes of this section, "child welfare worker" means~~  
40 ~~an employee of the department whose job includes supporting or~~

1 ~~providing child welfare services as defined in RCW 74.13.020 or child~~  
2 ~~protective services as defined in RCW 26.44.020.)~~) The department  
3 shall offer optional in-service training on de-escalation strategies  
4 on at least an annual basis to all child welfare workers.

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