

Legislature - First Session - 2019

Introducer's Statement of Intent

LB595

Chairperson: Senator Steve Lathrop

Committee: Judiciary

Date of Hearing: March 06, 2019

The following constitutes the reasons for this bill and the purposes which are sought to be accomplished thereby:

LB 595 would amend the 1991 Dispute Resolution Act in order to explicitly incorporate restorative justice into the Supreme Court's Office of Dispute Resolution's mission and purpose and to sustain its successful restorative justice pilot efforts conducted since 2015.

Restorative justice practices are grounded in a wide body of research and evidence demonstrating that an individual who has caused harm to another or the community and participates in restorative justice programs are: less likely to re-offend; better able to make amends to victims, including payment of restitution; and better able to contribute to community safety and well-being. Restorative justice empowers victims by giving them an opportunity to both ask questions of and explain to offenders the real impact of the crime. Offenders are held to account for what they have done and encouraged to take responsibility and make amends.

Restorative justice practices or restorative justice programs include, but are not limited to: victim youth conferences; victim-offender mediation or dialogue; family group conferencing; victim or community panels; and community restorative circles.

LB 595 would also:

1. Amend Legislative findings to include mediation's and restorative justice's benefits;
2. Change the name of the Office of Dispute Resolution to the Office of Restorative Justice and Dispute Resolution;
3. Add a Deputy Director for Restorative Justice and describe the director's duties;
4. Include restorative justice as a scope of services provided by approved Office of Dispute Resolution mediation centers;
5. Describe case types;
6. Provide qualifications for facilitators of restorative justice; and
7. Amend confidentiality and privilege provisions to include restorative justice conferences.
8. Harmonize parts of the juvenile code with proposed new language and practices.

Principal Introducer: _____

Senator Joni Albrecht