



Legislation Text

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..Drafter

Clerk 11/01/2021

A MOTION requesting the King County sheriff establish a fentanyl interdiction task force to develop strategies and techniques to stop the flow of fentanyl in order to reduce fentanyl-related overdoses and deaths in the Puget Sound region through the development of strategies to enhance coordination among local law enforcement agencies, including a report; and requesting the sheriff to seek grants to assist in the development and implementation of recommended strategies and techniques identified by the task force.

WHEREAS, over the past two decades the United States has experienced a growing crisis in opioid-related overdose deaths, and

WHEREAS, during that time, the annual number of overdose deaths in the United States has more than quadrupled from approximately seventeen thousand five hundred in 2000 to more than eighty-one thousand in 2020, and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that 2020 marked the highest number of overdose deaths ever reported in one year, and

WHEREAS, while overdose deaths were already increasing in the months preceding the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic, the latest numbers suggest an acceleration of overdose deaths during the pandemic, and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also reports that illicitly manufactured fentanyl appears to be the primary driver of increases in overdose deaths, and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently published a report showing the economic cost of fatal opioid overdose in 2017 totaled eight billion five hundred million dollars in Washington state and more than five hundred fifty billion dollars nationwide, and

WHEREAS, fentanyl is a potent synthetic opioid drug approved by the Food and Drug Administration for use as an analgesic and anesthetic that is approximately fifty times more potent than heroin and one hundred times more potent than morphine, and

WHEREAS, the Drug Enforcement Agency reported in 2020 that the increase in trafficking, distribution and abuse of illicitly produced fentanyl is primarily responsible for fueling the record-level overdose deaths observed nationwide, and

WHEREAS, local law enforcement agencies in the Puget Sound region have implemented harm reduction programs intended to prevent fentanyl-related overdose deaths, including providing officers with Naloxone and developing the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion program, and

WHEREAS, while those existing harm reduction programs are positive steps toward reducing fentanyl overdose-related deaths, there is no coordinated regional interdiction effort among local law enforcement agencies to develop strategies and techniques to stop the flow of fentanyl into the Puget Sound region, and

WHEREAS, King County could potentially reduce fentanyl overdose-related deaths through a comprehensive, coordinated, local law enforcement interdiction strategy;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

A. The council requests the King County sheriff convene and chair a fentanyl interdiction task force to prepare a report that makes recommendations for the development of a comprehensive, coordinated local law enforcement interdiction strategy to develop strategies and techniques to stop the flow of fentanyl into the Puget Sound region , community engagement strategies, and best practices for reducing and preventing fentanyl-related overdose and death.

B. The task force should include, but not be limited to, representatives from the following organizations

and agencies:

1. City police departments within King County;
2. The Kitsap County Sheriff's Office;
3. The Mason County Sheriff's Office;
4. The Pierce County Sheriff's Office;
5. The Snohomish County Sheriff's Office;
6. The Thurston County Sheriff's Office;
8. The King County prosecuting attorney's office;
9. The Washington state Office of the Attorney General;
10. The Washington State Patrol;
11. The United States Drug Enforcement Agency, Seattle Division;
12. The United States Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; and
13. The United States Federal Bureau of Investigations.

C. The report should include, but not be limited to:

1. A listing and description of recommended interdiction strategies and techniques that would enhance coordination between local law enforcement agencies to stop the flow of fentanyl into the Puget Sound region and thus reduce and prevent fentanyl-related overdose and death;
2. A listing of best practices for community engagement strategies and strategies and best practices for reducing and preventing fentanyl-related overdose and death; and
3. An analysis of the need for additional staff and resources in the department of public safety to coordinate regional fentanyl interdiction efforts, as well as a fiscal note summarizing the budget needed to support these efforts.

D. The King County sheriff should electronically file the report no later than June 30, 2022, with the clerk of the council, who shall retain the original and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers and the

lead staff of the law and justice committee, or its successor. E. The task force should continue to meet through at least December 31, 2022, to implement its recommendations and monitor coordinated fentanyl interdiction efforts.

F. The King County sheriff is requested to seek state and federal grants to assist in the development and implementation of recommended strategies and techniques identified by the task force.