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BILL



ANALYSIS

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Senate Bill 267 (as introduced 3-22-17)
Sponsor: Senator Judy K. Emmons
Committee: Education

Date Completed: 4-18-17

CONTENT

The bill would repeal an enacting section of the Student Safety Act that will repeal the Act on October 1, 2017.

The Student Safety Act provides for the development and implementation of a program that allows for confidential reports of potential self-harm or potential harm or criminal acts directed at students, school employees, or schools, to a hotline. Specifically, the Act does the following:

- Requires the Attorney General to establish the program, to the extent that funds are appropriated for it, and be responsible for the operational and administrative oversight of the program.
- Requires calls to the hotline to be transmitted to a vendor under contract with the Attorney General.
- Requires the program to provide for a means to review reported information and to direct the information, and any appropriate analysis of the potential threat, to local law enforcement officials and school officials.
- Requires hotline information to be referred immediately to a community mental health services program if a psychiatric emergency might be taking place.
- Requires the Attorney General to develop a source of information about community mental health resources, and to notify schools and law enforcement of this information source.
- Provides that reports or information submitted to the hotline are confidential, and must be maintained by the vendor for at least one year.
- Prescribes conditions for the release of information regarding a report or information submitted to the hotline.
- Prescribes a misdemeanor penalty for intentional disclosure of information in violation of the Act.
- Creates the "Student Safety Fund".
- Requires the Attorney General to prepare an annual report of information that was reported to the hotline, local level responses, costs, an analysis of the program's overall effectiveness, and other information.

The Act took effect on December 13, 2013, and will be repealed on October 1, 2017.

The bill would eliminate that sunset date.

BACKGROUND

In 2014, the Office of the Attorney General established the OK2SAY program under the requirements of the Student Safety Act. OK2SAY instituted a hotline that allows students to

confidentially report tips on potential harm or criminal activities directed at school students, school employees, and schools. The program also provides free presentations available for students in grades 6 through 12 to explain the confidentiality of the hotline and the protocol for submitting tips about bullying, peer abuse, suicide, assault, and gun violence.

Since the program has been in operation, from September 1, 2014, through March 31, 2017, it has accumulated 7,349 tips and facilitated 3,071 presentations for 361,941 people. In March 2017, the program accumulated 529 tips and facilitated 118 presentations before 17,129 people.

According to the program's 2015 Annual Report (the most recent available on the Attorney General's website), the program received 2,169 tips that year in 28 categories. The categories included bullying, cyberbullying, suicide threats, self-harm, drugs, assault, sexting, sexual misconduct, planned school attack, weapons possession, and others. OK2SAY technicians then made 1,006 referrals, including 773 to school officials, 110 to local law enforcement, 40 to community mental health agencies or other social service agencies, and the remainder to online resources, crisis lines, talk lines, and similar resources.

MCL 752.900 et al.

Legislative Analyst: Nathan Leaman

FISCAL IMPACT

The Department of Attorney General has requested funding totaling \$470,000 for fiscal year 2017-18 to continue the OK2SAY program that was developed following passage of the Student Safety Act. The requested funding would be sufficient to continue the OK2SAY program for FY 2017-18.

The bill would have no fiscal impact on local government.

Fiscal Analyst: Joe Carrasco

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.