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BILL ANALYSIS



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Senate Bill 613 (as introduced 10-16-25)
Sponsor: Senator Stephanie Chang
Committee: Civil Rights, Judiciary, and Public Safety

Date Completed: 12-2-25

CONTENT

The bill would enact the "Violent Crimes Clearance Act" to do the following:

- **Create the Violent Crime Clearance Grant Program (Program) within the Department of State Police (MSP) and allow a law enforcement agency to apply for grant funding under the Program.**
- **Establish criteria that the MSP would have to use to award a grant to a law enforcement agency.**
- **Require a grant recipient to use a grant to generally improve its ability to investigate violent crimes and comply with the bill's requirements.**
- **Require a grant recipient to submit an annual report to the MSP and the Legislature that included specific information concerning its use of the funding and its investigation and clearance of violent crimes.**
- **Require the MSP to identify practices, policies, or procedures that a grant recipient deployed and that had successfully improved clearance rates.**
- **Create the Violent Crime Clearance Rate Grant Fund (Fund) and require the Fund to be spent on grant funding and the MSP's administration of the Program.**

Definitions

"Violent crime" would mean that term as defined by the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Uniform Crime Reporting Program, which generally specifies that violent crime is one of four offenses: 1) murder and nonnegligent manslaughter; 2) rape; 3) robbery; 4) and aggravated assault. (See **BACKGROUND** for more details concerning the definition and general statistics of violent crime.)

"Clearance rate" would mean the quotient obtained by dividing the sum of the number of incidents of violent crime that have a clearance by arrest and the number of incidents of violent crime that have a clearance by exception by the total number of incidents of violent crime reported to the law enforcement agency.

"Clearance by arrest" or "cleared by arrest" would mean one of the following occurred after a violent crime:

- An individual was arrested for committing and is charged with the violent crime.
- An individual under 18 years of age had a verified petition provided to a court that lists the violent crime as an offense committed by the individual.

"Clearance by exception" or "cleared by exception" would mean the law enforcement agency to which a violent crime was reported has clearly and definitively established the identity of one or more offenders of the violent crime, has sufficient probable cause to arrest an offender of the violent crime, and has sufficient information to effectuate the arrest, but has a reason

outside the control of the law enforcement agency that prevents the law enforcement agency from making the arrest.

"Law enforcement agency" would mean the police department of a municipality or the sheriff's office of a county.

Grant Program Creation and Eligible Uses

The bill would create the Program within the MSP to improve clearance rates. A law enforcement agency could apply to the MSP for a grant under the Program. A law enforcement agency could join with one or more law enforcement agencies to submit a joint application for a grant under the Program.

A grant awarded under the Program could be used by a law enforcement agency for one or more of the following:

- Hiring, retaining, and training personnel to investigate violent crime, collect, process, and forensically test evidence, and analyze violent crime, including by monitoring temporal and geographic trends.
- Acquiring, upgrading, or replacing technology or equipment used for evidence collection or processing, or for forensic testing.
- Upgrading record management systems to comply with the bill's reporting requirements.
- Ensuring compliance with the bill's reporting requirements.
- Supporting witnesses to help investigate violent crime.

Awarding Grants

The MSP would have to make awards under the Program in a manner that complied with all the following:

- The awards were to law enforcement agencies that were geographically dispersed throughout the State.
- An award to a law enforcement agency was not more than 20% of the money available for the Program in a single year.
- If an award were to a law enforcement agency that previously received an award under the bill, the MSP considered, in the determination of the subsequent award, whether the municipality or county decreased funding to the law enforcement agency because the law enforcement agency previously received an award under the bill.

Program Reporting Requirements

A law enforcement agency that received a grant under the bill would have to submit an annual report to the MSP and to the Senate and the House of Representatives Appropriations Committees that included all the following information pertaining to that year:

- The fraction of cases in each offense category that had a clearance by arrest and that had a clearance by exception.
- The year each offense identified above was committed and the year each offense identified above was cleared by arrest or cleared by exception.
- The number of personnel, including law enforcement officers and nonsworn civilian personnel, hired or assigned to investigate violent crime.
- The number of personnel hired or assigned to collect, process, and test forensic evidence.
- A description of any training developed or implemented.

- A description of any technology or record management system that was purchased, acquired, or upgraded.
- The percentage of the grant award that was used for each of the bill's eligible uses.

MSP Evaluations

The bill would require the MSP to identify practices, policies, or procedures that a grant recipient deployed and that had successfully improved clearance rates. The MSP could contract with a third party to conduct an evaluation to identify the practices, policies, and procedures. The MSP would have to submit a biennial report to the Senate and the House of Representatives Appropriations Committees with a detailed account of the results and performance of the Program.

Violent Crime Clearance Rate Grant Fund

The bill would create the Fund within the State Treasury. The State Treasurer could receive money or other assets from any source for deposit into the Fund. The State Treasurer would have to direct investment of money in the Fund and credit to the Fund interest and earnings from fund investments. The MSP would be the administrator of the Fund for auditing purposes.

The MSP would have to spend money from the Fund, on appropriation, for grants awarded under the bill and up to 15% of the annual appropriations from the Fund for the administrative costs of the MSP in implementing the Program.

BACKGROUND

The FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program further defines the four offenses that constitute violent crime. Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter are the willful killing of one human being by another. This category generally does not include a death caused by accident or suicide or a death considered justifiable, such as the killing of a felon by a police officer in the line of duty or the killing of a felon, during the commission of a felony, by a private citizen. The UCR Program considers rape any penetration of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by another person's sexual organ, without the victim's consent. Robbery is considered the taking or attempt to take anything of value by force or threat of force or violence. Finally, aggravated assault is considered an unlawful attack by one person upon another for the infliction of bodily injury.

The FBI's UCR Program provides estimated totals of each offense that constitutes a violent crime. The most recent year estimates are for 2019, and these estimates generally indicate that the rates of murder and aggravated assault have slightly increased while the rates of rape and robbery have decreased by several percentage points. Overall, the UCR Program indicates that violent crimes decreased by 0.5% between 2018 and 2019 and by 3.8% between 2010 and 2019.¹

Legislative Analyst: Tyler VanHuyse

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill's provisions would result in costs to the MSP of approximately \$550,000 according to MSP's estimates, which would be spent to hire additional new staff, pay for necessary equipment, supplies, VPN, and cover existing staff time for administration of the proposed Program. While the eventual ongoing annual cost could be somewhat lower than the initial

¹ FBI: UCR, *Violent Crime*.

estimate, as one-time costs are included, the continuing cost would include the required administration of grants from the Fund, evaluations, and a report to the Legislature. Local law enforcement agencies that would receive grant funding from the Program also would have to submit a report to the MSP and the Legislature.

Under the bill, the Fund would be created in Treasury which, should funds be appropriated to the Fund, would be used to support grant awards. The MSP could spend up to 15% to cover administrative costs. The bill contains no appropriations designated for the Fund, thus, without appropriation, the Program would not become operational.

The bill would not have a significant fiscal impact on the Department of Treasury. The creation of the Fund and the direction of investments would not require any additional staff or significant resources. If the average daily Fund balance exceeded about \$1.0 million, it is possible that minor costs could be incurred. This would depend on the total amount of money in the Fund over time.

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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.