

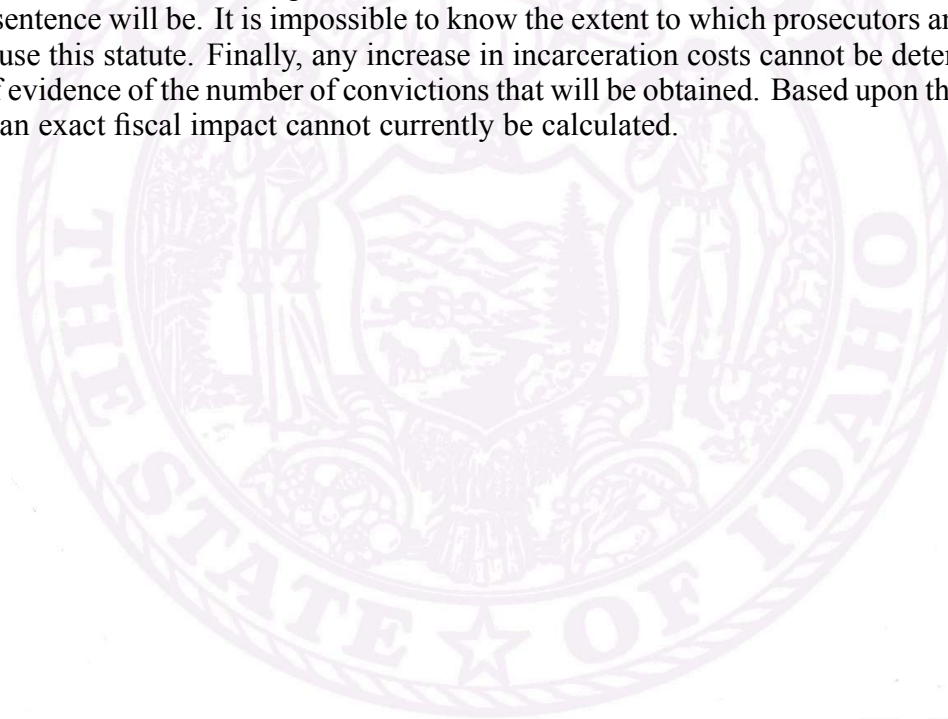
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

RS22211

Idaho’s health care providers are required to treat patients who come to them in need, even when patients are unruly or violent. Often, patients, under the influence of drugs or with stress-induced anger, assault the very professionals who are tasked with helping them. Current Idaho law protects social workers, EMS personnel, police officers, and certain others who are regularly in harm’s way. This bill extends a similar protection to health care professionals who are assaulted because of their profession. It does not apply to assault by a person who lacks the ability to form intent due to mental illness or defect.

FISCAL NOTE

An exact measure of the fiscal impact of this legislation cannot be accurately calculated due to a number of factors. Currently, there are no mechanisms for gathering data on the number of cases involving assaults against health care workers under these circumstances. As a result, the number of possible cases involving these crimes cannot be predicted. In addition, prosecutors have the discretion of whether and how to prosecute crimes and courts have the discretion to determine how lengthy a sentence will be. It is impossible to know the extent to which prosecutors and courts will choose to use this statute. Finally, any increase in incarceration costs cannot be determined in the absence of evidence of the number of convictions that will be obtained. Based upon these unknown variables, an exact fiscal impact cannot currently be calculated.



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