



104TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2025 and 2026

HB5560

Introduced 2/13/2026, by Rep. Debbie Meyers-Martin

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

20 ILCS 1305/10-68 new
105 ILCS 5/27-23.19 new
105 ILCS 5/34-18.88 new
110 ILCS 947/65.140 new

Amends the Department of Human Services Act. Requires the Department of Human Services to establish a Community Grief and Violence Prevention Pilot Program to interrupt cycles of violence and address grief and trauma in the City of Chicago and Southland region. Specifies that, under the Pilot Program, funds shall be allocated to deploy Community Grief Response Teams, which shall provide immediate, on-site trauma support to families and neighborhoods within 24 hours of a violent incident; shall provide long-term case management and grief counseling to survivors; and shall facilitate restorative justice circles to resolve community conflicts before they escalate to violence. Amends the School Code. Provides that, beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, every public elementary school shall incorporate grief literacy and restorative justice practices and programs into its social-emotional learning standards. Requires the Board of Trustees of the Chicago Public Schools to expand the Parent University Program to include mandatory modules on violence prevention, trauma-informed care, and recognizing signs of grief. Amends the Higher Education Student Assistance Act. Requires the Illinois Student Assistance Commission to establish a grant program to support the recruitment and retention of mental health professionals in communities disproportionately impacted by violence. Requires the State of Illinois to formally recognize the Master of Social Work (MSW) as a professional degree essential to public health and safety. Effective immediately.

LRB104 18435 KTG 31877 b

1 AN ACT concerning violence prevention.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 5. The Department of Human Services Act is amended
5 by adding Section 10-68 as follows:

6 (20 ILCS 1305/10-68 new)

7 Sec. 10-68. Community Grief and Violence Prevention Pilot
8 Program.

9 (a) Subject to appropriation, the Department shall
10 establish a Community Grief and Violence Prevention Pilot
11 Program to interrupt cycles of violence and address grief and
12 trauma. The pilot program shall launch initially in the City
13 of Chicago and the Southland region, encompassing southern
14 Cook County and eastern Will County.

15 (b) The Department shall prioritize grant funding and
16 implementation partnerships with community-led organizations
17 with established track records in violence prevention and
18 grief support, specifically including the Save Our
19 Schoolchildren organization, to serve as lead community
20 partners. The Department shall partner with Governors State
21 University, specifically its College of Health and Human
22 Services and Social Work programs, to develop the training
23 curriculum, evaluate program efficacy, and certify the

1 workforce described in this Section.

2 (c) Under the pilot program, funds shall be allocated to
3 deploy Community Grief Response Teams. These teams shall:

4 (1) provide immediate, on-site trauma support to
5 families and neighborhoods within 24 hours of a violent
6 incident;

7 (2) provide long-term case management and grief
8 counseling to survivors; and

9 (3) facilitate restorative justice circles to resolve
10 community conflicts before they escalate to violence.

11 (d) In collaboration with Governors State University, the
12 Department shall administer a trauma and grief support
13 certification for educators, health care workers, law
14 enforcement officers, and community outreach staff. This
15 training must include cultural responsiveness, identifying
16 signs of childhood trauma, and de-escalation techniques.

17 Section 10. The School Code is amended by adding Sections
18 27-23.19 and 34-18.88 as follows:

19 (105 ILCS 5/27-23.19 new)

20 Sec. 27-23.19. Grief literacy and violence prevention.

21 (a) Beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, every public
22 elementary school shall incorporate grief literacy and
23 restorative justice practices and program into its
24 social-emotional learning standards.

1 (b) Instruction shall be age-appropriate and designed to
2 help students:

3 (1) identify and process complex emotions related to
4 loss and trauma;

5 (2) resolve conflicts using non-violent communication;
6 and

7 (3) access school-based healing programs and
8 counseling resources.

9 (105 ILCS 5/34-18.88 new)

10 Sec. 34-18.88. Grief literacy and violence prevention. The
11 Board shall expand the Parent University program to include
12 mandatory modules on violence prevention, trauma-informed
13 care, and recognizing signs of grief. If a student is subject
14 to disciplinary action involving violence or threats of
15 violence, the student's parent or guardian may be referred to
16 complete specific restorative justice and violence prevention
17 tracks within the Parent University program or a similar
18 community-based program. The goal of such referral is to equip
19 parents with tools to support their child's rehabilitation and
20 to foster a home environment conducive to healing.

21 Section 15. The Higher Education Student Assistance Act is
22 amended by adding Section 65.140 as follows:

23 (110 ILCS 947/65.140 new)

1 Sec. 65.140. The Social Work Workforce Pipeline Grant.

2 (a) The Commission shall establish a grant program to
3 support the recruitment and retention of mental health
4 professionals in communities disproportionately impacted by
5 violence.

6 (b) The State of Illinois formally recognizes the Master
7 of Social Work (MSW) as a professional degree essential to
8 public health and safety.

9 (c) Subject to appropriation, the Commission shall award
10 grants to students enrolled in the Master of Social Work
11 program at Governors State University who commit to working in
12 the Pilot areas designated in Section 10-65 of the Department
13 of Human Services Act for a minimum of 3 years
14 post-graduation.

15 (d) The purpose of this grant is to maximize access to
16 federal and State financial aid and to eliminate financial
17 barriers for a culturally responsive workforce.

18 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon
19 becoming law.