

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1719

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Human Services & Corrections, March 30, 1995

Title: An act relating to the office of inspector general within the department of social and health services.

Brief Description: Creating the office of inspector general within the department of social and health services.

Sponsors: House Committee on Children & Family Services (originally sponsored by Representatives Boldt, Koster, Cooke, Carlson, Stevens, Benton, Dyer, Padden and Thompson).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services & Corrections: 3/28/95, 3/30/95 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Hargrove, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Fairley, Kohl, Long, Palmer, Schow, Smith and Strannigan.

Staff: Richard Rodger (786-7461)

Background: The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) investigates fraud in the aid to families with dependent children program and food stamp program through the Office of Special Investigations. The Office of Special Investigations: (1) investigates applicants and recipients who provide information during the application and recertification processes that contains apparent discrepancies; (2) provides a welfare fraud hotline used to report people suspected of fraud and abuse; (3) conducts general investigations covering all department programs; and (4) investigates allegations against department employees who are suspected of criminal or administrative misconduct.

Summary of Amended Bill: The Attorney General's Office investigates criminal acts of abuse and fraud in DSHS's programs. DSHS continues the primary responsibility for fraud and abuse detection and refers cases to the Attorney General.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: The transfer of all fraud and abuse investigations to the Office of Inspector General within DSHS is eliminated.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on January 1, 1995.

Testimony For: Fraud investigations need a higher priority and greater visibility within DSHS.

Testimony Against: The duties could also be handled through the Attorney General's Office.

Testified: Representative Boldt, prime sponsor; John Bumford, Charles Brigham, Lee Benford, DSHS Office of Special Investigations (pro); Kathleen Mix, Attorney General's Office.