

FINAL BILL REPORT

E2SHB 2046

C 272 L 97

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Creating foster parent liaison positions.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Cooke, Kessler and Boldt).

House Committee on Children & Family Services

House Committee on Appropriations

Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections

Senate Committee on Ways & Means

Background: Under existing law, the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) is required to develop a recruiting plan for an adequate number of foster and adoptive homes and submit the plan annually to the appropriate committees of the Legislature. The report must include a section on foster care turnover, causes, and recommendations. High turnover of foster parents is attributed to poor working relationships between foster parents and department case workers. The department is also required to monitor out-of-home placements and report the results of its monitoring to appropriate legislative committees on an annual basis. Foster parents are considered part of a professional foster care team serving dependent children, but the department does not provide child care when foster parents are required to attend meetings outside the home.

Summary: The DSHS will provide an annual report to the Governor and the Legislature on the success of the department in completing home studies, reducing the foster parent turnover rate, and implementing and operating the passport program. The DSHS will contract with a private agency to recruit an adequate number of prospective adoptive and foster homes. The department will contract with a private agency for a foster parent liaison position in each departmental region. The foster parent liaison will reduce foster parent turnover by a specified percentage established in their contract with the DSHS. The DSHS will contract for home studies for legally free children who have been awaiting adoption finalization for more than 90 days. The home studies selected are for the children awaiting adoption finalization for the longest period of time. The DSHS will provide foster parents who are required to attend training, meetings, and other official functions with child care. The department will provide a foster care passport for each foster child who has been in foster care for 90 consecutive days or more. However, the foster parents are to be notified before placement of any known health conditions that pose a serious threat to

the child and any know behavioral history that presents a serious threat to the child or others. entering care after the effective date of the legislation. The foster parent will keep the information confidential.

Votes on Final Passage:

House 96 0

Senate 44 0 (Senate amended)

House 98 0 (House concurred)

Effective: July 1, 1997