

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## E2SHB 1493

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C 267 L 99

Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Establishing a collaborative effort to address the housing needs of homeless children and their families.

**Sponsors:** By House Committee on Children & Family Services (Originally sponsored by Representatives Tokuda, Boldt, Edwards, Lovick, Veloria, O'Brien, Barlean, Ogden, Conway, Schual-Berke, Murray, Dickerson, Kenney, Regala, Cooper, Stensen, Cody, Anderson, Santos, Rockefeller, Kagi, Edmonds, Lantz and Wood).

**House Committee on Children & Family Services**

**House Committee on Appropriations**

**Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections**

**Senate Committee on Ways & Means**

### **Background:**

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) was sued by the Washington Coalition for the Homeless over the department's role in delivering services to homeless children and their families. In December 1997, the Washington Supreme Court ruled in favor of the plaintiff and determined, based on language in the state child welfare statute, that the department had a responsibility to devise and implement a "coordinated and comprehensive" plan for the care and protection of homeless children and their families. The court's ruling only applied to homeless children and their families, not to a broader population of homeless children without parental care or support. The court also ruled that juvenile court judges have the authority to order the department to offer housing assistance to a child's family when homelessness is the primary reason for placing a child in foster care or continuing a foster care placement.

The Governor directed the Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development (DCTED) and the DSHS to jointly develop the "coordinated and comprehensive" plan required by the Supreme Court's ruling.

### **Summary:**

The DCTED is the principal state agency responsible for the state's activities for developing a coordinated and comprehensive plan to serve homeless children and their families. The DSHS must coordinate with the DCTED on the plan to serve homeless children and their families and must modify its programs and services to address the

needs of homeless children and their families. In dependency cases, the judge must determine whether the DSHS used reasonable efforts, including housing assistance, to avoid out-of-home placements or shorten the duration of an out-of-home placement.

The DSHS is directed to license and establish up to 75 HOPE Center beds across the state for short-term crisis residential services, and up to 75 "Responsible Living Skills Program" beds for dependent youth. Subject to available funds, these beds are to be established at a rate of 25 percent per year, beginning in the year 2000, and will be fully implemented by 2003.

The DSHS must link with the Missing Children's Clearinghouse and make sure that efforts are made to reunify runaway youth served in its programs with parents who are looking for them.

The Institute for Public Policy is required to evaluate and report to the Legislature on the HOPE Centers and Responsible Living Skills Centers, and to evaluate procedures used by DSHS to link with the missing children's clearinghouse to reunite them with parents who are looking for them.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

House 98 0  
Senate 48 0 (Senate amended)  
House (House refused to concur)  
Senate (Senate receded)  
Senate 48 0 (Senate amended)  
House 96 0 (House concurred)

**Effective:** July 25, 1999  
January 1, 2000 (Sections 12 and 13)