

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1109

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Education*

Title: An act relating to education.

Brief Description: Creating a task force on children of substance abusers.

Sponsor(s): Representatives Jones, Peery, Brough, Jacobsen, Miller, Brumsickle, Rasmussen, Betrozoff, Pruitt, G. Fisher, Phillips, Valle, Holland, Dorn, Roland, Dellwo, Braddock, Cole, Sprenkle, R. King, Winsley, Ferguson, Riley, Vance, Wineberry, Scott, Broback, Leonard, R. Johnson, Ludwig, Silver, H. Myers, Cooper and Brekke.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Education, January 30, 1991, DPS.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION**

Majority Report: *That Substitute House Bill No. 1109 be substituted therefore, and the substitute bill do pass.*
Signed by 19 members: Representatives Peery, Chair; G. Fisher, Vice Chair; Brough, Ranking Minority Member; Vance, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Betrozoff; Broback; Brumsickle; Cole; Dorn; Holland; P. Johnson; Jones; Neher; Orr; Phillips; Rasmussen; Roland; H. Sommers; and Valle.

Staff: Susan Kirkpatrick (786-7291).

Background: An increasing number of children are being exposed to alcohol, cocaine or other drugs through their mothers while pregnant. Many of these children are suffering from a variety of problems, including mental retardation, poor social abilities, low cognitive skills, attention deficit disorders, hyperactivity, or speech problem caused by the use of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco by their mothers during pregnancy. These children will be entering the state's public school system. Educating these children will require additional resources, and perhaps new educational strategies and techniques.

Many of these learning impairments are preventable and increased parental education on the effects of substance abuse during pregnancy may aid in reducing the number of children with learning impairments.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Task Force on the Children of Substance Abusers is created to identify the current and projected number of children in Washington, including the number of children who are in or will be entering Washington's public schools, who have learning impairments caused by mothers who abused alcohol or drugs during pregnancy; to review the adequacy of current social service and public school programs to address the special needs of these children; to review and analyze educational and treatment programs designed to reduce substance abuse during pregnancy; and to develop recommendations and a plan of implementation for enhancing, enlarging, or replacing the existing social service and educational programs for these children and their parents. The task force will report its final findings and recommendations to the appropriate standing committees of the Legislature before December 1, 1991.

The task force will consist of representatives from the Senate, one each from the majority and minority parties; House of Representatives, one each from the majority and minority parties; Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; Department of Health; county health departments; Department of Social and Health Services; University of Washington's Center for Child Development and Mental Retardation; Washington Education Association; Association of Washington School Principals; Washington State School Directors' Association; Washington Association of School Administrators; Washington State Parent-Teachers Association; the Learning Disability Association of Washington; Department of Community Development; chemical dependency associations, limited to one representative; and private advocacy groups serving families and children, limited to one representative.

Substitute Bill Compared To Original Bill: The responsibilities of the task force are expanded to include review of treatment programs designed to reduce substance abuse during pregnancy and to develop a plan of implementation. Membership on the task force is expanded to include representatives from the Department of Community Development, a chemical dependency association, and a private advocacy group serving families and children. The representative from DSHS is no longer required to come from the Bureau of Alcohol and Substance Abuse. An emergency clause was added to make the bill effective immediately. The appropriation was removed.

Fiscal Note: Requested January 16, 1991.

Appropriation: Removed.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: An increasing number of children are suffering from a variety of learning impairments caused by the use of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco by their mothers during pregnancy. Educating these children will require additional resources and perhaps new educational strategies and techniques. Increased parent education on the effects of substance abuse during pregnancy may aid in reducing the number of children with learning impairments.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Lonnie Johns-Brown, National Organization for Women (favors bill but requested that it be expanded to require the task force to investigate the effects of drug and alcohol use by both parents during pregnancy and during the time the children are growing up); Marcia Costello, Superintendent of Public Instruction (favors bill but requested that a representative from the Department of Community Development be included as a representative on the task force); and Fred Cook, DSHS, Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse (favors bill but requested that the DSHS representative not be designated, that the task force include representatives from the chemical dependency associations, and that the deadline for the final report be extended to December 1, 1992). Note: The substitute bill addressed some of the changes requested by the witnesses.