

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1476

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Trade & Economic Development*

Title: An act relating to employer-assisted child and family care.

Brief Description: Modifying the employer-assisted child and family care partnership.

Sponsor(s): Representatives Wineberry, Fuhrman, Heavey, Locke, Leonard, Dorn, Valle, Brekke, Scott, Anderson, Ferguson, Wang, Phillips, Rasmussen, Dellwo, Peery, Jones, Orr, Spanel, Prentice, Sprenkle, O'Brien and Hargrove.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Trade & Economic Development, February 28, 1991, DPS.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
TRADE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Majority Report: *That Substitute House Bill No. 1476 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.*
Signed by 11 members: Representatives Cantwell, Chair; Sheldon, Vice Chair; Forner, Ranking Minority Member; Betrozoff, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Ferguson; Kremen; Ludwig; Moyer; Rasmussen; Riley; and Roland.

Staff: Charlie Gavigan (786-7340).

Background: Child care is licensed and coordinated by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). In addition to regulating child care providers, DSHS also provides technical assistance and other programs to help child care providers.

In 1987, the Legislature created a Child Care Resources Coordinator in DSHS, and directed the coordinator to help encourage employer-provided assistance for child care.

In 1988, the Legislature established a Child Care Coordinating Committee to help coordinate state agencies' efforts regarding child care and to provide recommendations to the Legislature on child care subsidy programs.

The Legislature also established a child care policy in statute in 1988. The policy encourages the participation of families and businesses in operating and expanding the child care system in the State to meet the needs of the labor market and to assist families. The policy encourages traditional at-home parenting, but also promotes the availability and affordability of quality child care for families that need child care assistance.

The Child Care Partnership is a subcommittee of the Child Care Coordinating Committee. This subcommittee: (1) facilitates partnerships between the public and private sectors to increase the availability, quality, and affordability of child care in the State; (2) proposes statutory and administrative changes to increase employer involvement in child care; (3) studies liability insurance issues; and (4) advises and assists an employer liaison.

An employer liaison position was created in DSHS in 1989 and co-located in the Business Assistance Center in the Department of Trade and Economic Development. This staff position assists the Child Care Partnership and helps businesses provide child care. The employer liaison position also helps local resource and referral organizations increase their capacity to provide assistance to businesses regarding child care.

A Child Care Facility Fund was created in 1989 to make grants, loans, and loan guarantees to employers and other organizations to assist in the provision of child care for employees. The fund uses federal funds.

Summary of Substitute Bill: An employer requesting a loan, loan guarantee, or grant from the Child Care Facility Fund must complete an assessment of their employees' child care needs. The fund must consider this assessment in evaluating the employer's application.

Persons or organizations may apply to the Child Care Resources Coordinator for funding to establish or operate a community-based child care resource and referral program. The community-based child care resource and referral program must develop a service plan to assist parents, child care providers, and employers. At least 25 percent of the funding for child care resource and referral programs that receive funding through the Child Care Resources Coordinator must be community matching funds.

The Child Care Resources Coordinator is to actively seek funds for grants to community-based resource and referral programs. Some of the coordinators responsibilities are changed from providing assistance to parents, child care

providers, and employers to providing assistance to community-based child care resource and referral programs.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Changes to the composition and duties of the Child Care Partnership are removed. Authorization for imposing impact fees for child care is removed. The additional employee liaison position is eliminated, leaving the existing position unchanged. Clarifications are made to the grant program for community-based child care resource and referral organizations.

Fiscal Note: Requested January 30, 1991.

Appropriation: Yes.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: Quality child care facilities are difficult to find, as is affordable child care. Resource and referral networks need to be expanded to help working parents find quality and affordable child care. Employer assistance in the provision of child care helps disseminate information and make child care more accessible for employees. Grants and assistance to community-based child care resource and referral sources are greatly needed, particularly in rural or economically disadvantaged areas.

Testimony Against: Impact fees should not be used for child care facilities.

Witnesses: Representative Jesse Wineberry; Stephanie Cross (supports); Mary Ann Warren, Catholic Family Child Services and Child Care Resource and Referral (supports); Eileen O'Brien (supports); Lonnie Johns Brown, Child Care Works for Washington and National Organization for Women (supports); Margaret Casey, Children's Budget Coalition (supports); Janet Hammersmith, Child Care Action Council (supports); Carl Nelson, Washington Retail Association (supports except for impact fees); Dale Apte, Mervyn's (supports except for impact fees); Bill Dethlefs, Child Care Partnership; Mark Triplett, Building Industry Association (supports except for impact fees); and Karen Tvedt, Department of Social and Health Services.