

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1543

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*As Reported By House Committee on:  
Human Services*

**Title:** An act relating to establishment of a family support worker program in schools.

**Brief Description:** Providing family support for schools with at-risk students.

**Sponsor(s):** Representatives Fraser, Belcher, Winsley, Leonard, Beck, Hine, Ebersole, Brekke, Jones, Pruitt, Holland, Jacobsen and Heavey.

**Brief History:**

Reported by House Committee on:  
Human Services, March 4, 1991, DPS.

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**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
HUMAN SERVICES**

**Majority Report:** *That Substitute House Bill No. 1543 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.*  
Signed by 10 members: Representatives Leonard, Chair; Winsley, Ranking Minority Member; Tate, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Anderson; Beck; Brekke; Hargrove; Hochstatter; R. King; and H. Myers.

**Staff:** David Knutson (786-7146).

**Background:** Children experiencing social or health problems do not always receive assistance to address those problems, until they become chronic or severe. The public schools offer an effective site for the early identification and assessment of a child's problems. Problems that children bring to school affect their ability to learn. They also force school instructional staff to address the child's problems rather than concentrating on student education.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** The Department of Social and Health Services is authorized to develop a program to fund school based family support worker projects. The programs will be awarded on a competitive basis. A local match of 25 percent is required for each project. Department staff will, if practical, rotate or loan employees to participating schools to serve as family support workers. A report to the Legislature is required by December 1, 1992,

on the expansion of family support worker projects to additional schools. Department sponsored evaluations of family support worker programs are required by December of odd numbered years.

**Substitute Bill Compared To Original Bill:** The family support worker program is made permissive. The Department of Social and Health Services is authorized, but not required, to fund family support worker programs. The appropriation is deleted.

**Appropriation:** Removed.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested February 1, 1991.

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

**Testimony For:** When children and their families have problems, the child often brings those problems to school with them. If the problem is severe enough, a school teacher may spend more time addressing the child's problem than educating children in the class room. If schools had family support workers located in schools, it would free teachers to teach and offer a family resource through schools to address child and family problems.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Witnesses:** Mark Haddock, Olympia Public Schools; Lonnie Johns-Brown, National Association of Social Workers; Colleen Waterhouse and Mary Ault, Department of Social and Health Services; Margaret Casey, Children's Budget Coalition; Pat McCarthy, Tacoma Public Schools; Laurie Lippold, Children's Home Society; and Gladys Burns and Elaine Rose, City of Seattle.