

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1843

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Human Services*

Title: An act relating to services to children in poverty.

Brief Description: Establishing the children's early intervention program.

Sponsor(s): Representatives Leonard, Winsley, Dorn, Moyer, Rasmussen, Basich, Spanel, Pruitt, Haugen, Belcher, Phillips, Anderson, Heavey, Fraser, Roland, Cooper, Grant, Prentice, Wilson, R. King, Scott, Chandler, Nelson, R. Johnson, Wineberry, Sheldon and Jones.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Human Services, March 6, 1991, DPS.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
HUMAN SERVICES**

Majority Report: *That Substitute House Bill No. 1843 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.*
Signed by 10 members: Representatives Leonard, Chair; Riley, Vice Chair; Winsley, Ranking Minority Member; Tate, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Beck; Brekke; Hargrove; Hochstatter; R. King; and H. Myers.

Staff: Dawn Jones (786-7077).

Background: The energy programs of community action agencies and communities service agencies, serve approximately 100,000 families per year. It has come to the attention of these agencies that many of these low income families are in need of additional services that are critical to the well being of children.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Legislature finds that the local agencies currently providing services to those in poverty are best situated to reach children in poverty. Any agency designated as a Local Community Action Agency or Local Community Service Agency may apply to the Department of Community Development for authorization to operate a Children's Early Intervention Program.

The program will include comprehensive needs assessments of low-income families, identification of families eligible for comprehensive assistance, services provided by a resource specialist, and the provision of crisis resources. Agencies administering the program may enter into agreements with other local agencies for the provision of services to eligible families.

The Department of Community Development and participating local community action or community service agencies will report on the implementation of the program to the appropriate standing committees of the Legislature by January 15, 1993.

The department will enter into a contract with a local community action agency to conduct a state-wide assessment of the needs of low-income families. The sum of \$400,000 is appropriated for the biennium ending June 30, 1993, from the general fund to the Department of Community Development.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The funding to operate a Comprehensive Assessment Program for children and families in poverty, and to provide services to poor families is removed. Language requiring the provision of services and expenditure of funds is removed. An appropriation to conduct a state-wide assessment of low-income families is included. The Department of Community Development will contract with a community action agency to conduct the needs assessment.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Appropriation: Yes.

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

Testimony For: The Community Action Network is a federally authorized statewide system with over 20 years experience working with people in poverty. There are over 31 agencies within the state and they serve every county in the state. The agencies have quietly, efficiently, and effectively served low-income people. The currently existing programs enable the agency as a whole to see and work with almost the entire low-income population of Washington State. We think it is time to use those existing systems to better advantage on behalf of the state. In selected areas we can provide at lower cost, more wide spread results with excellent service. We think that there are a number of low-income families who do not have access to low income services across the board because they are not aware of them. We see 100,000 people each year in the energy assistance programs. We would like

to take the existing program, add a piece that works in a more comprehensive way and provide the kinds of services that are preventive and early intervention in nature. This will deter dropout status and other kinds of dysfunctional behaviors.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Rick Allen, Community Action Association; and Margaret Casey, Children's Budget Coalition.