

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2472

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Human Services*

Title: An act relating to family preservation services.

Brief Description: Providing family preservation services.

Sponsor(s): Representatives Ebersole, Winsley, Leonard,
P. Johnson, Braddock, Anderson, Ludwig, J. Kohl and
H. Myers.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Human Services, February 5, 1992, DPS.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
HUMAN SERVICES**

Majority Report: *The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass.* Signed by 11 members: Representatives Leonard, Chair; Riley, Vice 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: Family preservation services are designed for families where children are at imminent risk of out-of-home placement due to child abuse or neglect, serious family conflict, mental health, or delinquency problems. The first program in the nation to provide family preservation services began in Pierce County in 1974. The state of Washington began funding family preservation services in 1979 for children served through the Children's Protective Services and Family Reconciliation Services programs. Since 1979, family preservation service providers through the Homebuilders Program has expanded to serve children in Pierce, King, Spokane, Snohomish, Kitsap, Whitman, Yakima, Thurston, Skagit, Jefferson, and Clark counties. Currently, the Homebuilders Program serves 40 percent of the children and families referred by the Department of Social and Health Services in the 11 counties covered by the program.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Department of Social and Health Services is authorized to provide family preservation

services to all eligible families in the state, within funding provided for this purpose. Family preservation services are not an entitlement and any expansion is conditioned on additional funding appropriated for this purpose. Family preservation services may be provided by the state or private non-profit organizations which meet specific criteria. The Department of Social and Health Services is required to conduct a family preservation study in one departmental region of the state. The study will include a needs assessment, a plan and time frame for service expansion, and establish a procedure for identifying families eligible for family preservation services. The department will report its findings on January 1, 1993.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The Department of Social and Health Services is authorized to transfer funds from foster care services to family preservation services when a child is in imminent risk of foster care placement. Several technical, non-substantive changes are made.

Fiscal Note: Requested January 24, 1992.

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

Testimony For: If family preservation services were available to children and families in crisis, up to 70 percent of placements into foster care could be prevented. Family preservation services represent the most sophisticated social service technology available to strengthen families and prevent out of home placement.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Charlotte Booth, Behavioral Sciences Institute; Susan Robison, Center for the Study of Social Policy; Vanessa Hodges, University of Washington, School of Social Work; Betsy Cole, Child Welfare League of America; Brian Nicholson, Catholic Community Services; and Diana Roberts, Department of Social and Health Services.