

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2846

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Human Services*

Title: An act relating to at-risk families.

Brief Description: Improving the responsiveness of services for at-risk children and families.

Sponsor(s): Representatives Leonard, Beck, Riley, Ludwig, Winsley, Wineberry, Paris, Brough, Pruitt, Franklin, Basich, Ogden, Roland, Nelson, Wood, Valle, Belcher, Brekke, Hine, Bray, H. Myers, Rasmussen, J. Kohl and Anderson; by request of Dept. of Social and Health Services, Department of Health, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Community Development and Employment Security Department.

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: State agencies and programs have a difficult time serving children and families needing assistance from more than one service provider. Problems faced by children and families typically involve several bureaucracies, each addressing a distinct, categorical problem. Children and families which face multiple problems involving schools, alcohol or drug abuse, criminal activity, abuse, neglect or family dysfunction, mental illness, developmental disability, poverty, or health problems, pose real quandaries for bureaucratic organizations which administer categorical funds and organize around specific services instead of service populations.

Summary of Substitute Bill: A Family Policy Council will be made up of the superintendent of public instruction, secretary of the Department of Social and Health Services, secretary of the Department of Health, commissioner of the Employment Security Department, and director of the Department of Community Development. The council will receive funding requests from local consortiums to address the needs of children and families whose needs are not met by the programs of a single department. Funds for consortium projects will be identified by agencies represented on the Family Policy Council for budget requests or existing appropriations for services to children and families.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The Family Policy Council is given specific authority to fund local projects. Existing statutory authority is restated regarding the rights of children and rights of parents.

Fiscal Note: Requested January 24, 1992.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes affect July 1, 1992.

Testimony For: Many children and families have problems which cut across several state agency programs. State programs for children and families typically provide services based on categorical funding and service criteria. Collaborative funding and service systems can address many of the complex problems facing today's children and rights of parents.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Dick Thompson, Department of Social and Health Services; Judith Billings, Superintendent of Public Instruction; Barbara Gooding, Department of Community Development; Kristine Gebbe, Department of Health; and Vernon Stoner, Employment Security Department.