

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1523

AS OF APRIL 3, 1991

Brief Description: Establishing regional service centers for the deaf.

SPONSORS: House Committee on Revenue (originally sponsored by Representatives Day, Wineberry, Edmondson, Bray, Lisk, Belcher, Inslee, Morris, Jones, Mitchell, Franklin, Mielke, Nelson, Casada, Brekke, Ferguson, Leonard, Silver, Ludwig, Rayburn, Peery, Scott, Pruitt, Chandler, McLean, Holland, Wang, Jacobsen, Winsley and Anderson).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON REVENUE

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Staff: Suzanne Brown (786-7483)

Hearing Dates: April 3, 1991

BACKGROUND:

Communications may present barriers to deaf and hard-of-hearing citizens seeking or receiving educational or human services in Washington.

Currently, five local deaf service centers in Washington provide advocacy services, referrals to existing programs and services and act as an information clearinghouse for service providers and deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals. These centers are located in Yakima, Spokane, Vancouver, Seattle and Tacoma and receive funding from a variety of public and private sources.

Some members of the deaf and hard-of-hearing community report that deaf service centers should be provided statewide in order to assure quality human services for all deaf and hard-of-hearing citizens throughout the state.

SUMMARY:

The Legislature intends, within available resources, to provide quality human services to deaf and hard-of-hearing citizens by training service providers, ensuring communication accessibility via interpreters and other information services and coordinating between the public and private organizations which serve these citizens.

Five regional centers are established according to specified regional designations. These centers must be legally

established nonprofit organizations and meet criteria established by the Office of Deaf Services. Each regional service center must establish an advisory committee composed of voting members of the center's board of directors. Advisory committees must meet regularly.

The State Advisory Committee for State Programs for the Deaf is established. The committee includes the following representatives: one individual from the Office of Deaf Services and each regional service center, and two representatives of each regional advisory committee. The Secretary of the Department of Social and Health Services may designate other committee members to represent, by vote or membership, the program development interests of the regional advisory committee, the Office of Deaf Services, and the regional service centers. The state advisory committee must monitor and report to the Office of Deaf Services regarding the regional service centers programs and activities on a quarterly basis.

The Office of Deaf Services, in consultation with the State Advisory Committee for State Programs for the Deaf, must recommend programs to regional service centers. These programs must include at least individual and family counseling, interpreter services and vocational programs. The Office of Deaf Services must award contracts to qualified regional service centers.

Regional service centers cannot provide services offered by licensed hearing aid dispensers. Upon request, centers may provide deaf and hard of hearing individuals with a list of local licensed hearing aid dispensers and may not recommend or refer specific licensed hearing aid dispensers.

The Secretary of the Department of Social and Health Services is authorized to appoint a deaf and hard of hearing advisory committee or council if required by law. In addition to existing requirements, all DSHS advisory committees or councils must have appropriate geographical representation.

In addition to the Business and Occupation tax (B&O), a 0.4 percent tax is placed on the manufacturing, wholesaling, and retailing of audio tapes, audio records and audio compact disks. These taxes are intended to provide a funding source for deaf centers and other deaf programs.

The Regional Deaf Service Centers Program is null and void unless taxes providing a funding source for this act are included in this bill or another bill. The appropriation is eliminated if the program is included in the 1991-93 operating budget.

Appropriation: \$1.7 million

Revenue: yes

Fiscal Note: requested April 2, 1991

