

**SENATE BILL REPORT**

**E2SSB 5025**

**AS PASSED SENATE, MARCH 14, 1991**

**Brief Description:** Providing services for at-risk youth and their families.

**SPONSORS:** Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Craswell, Owen, Bailey, L. Smith, Roach, Stratton and Oke).

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES**

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5025 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Roach, Chairman; L. Smith, Vice Chairman; Craswell, Stratton, and Talmadge.

**Staff:** Jan Sharar (786-7472)

**Hearing Dates:** January 23, 1991; February 19, 1991

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS**

**Majority Report:** That Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 5025 be substituted therefor, and the second substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators McDonald, Chairman; Craswell, Vice Chairman; Bailey, Bluechel, Cantu, Hayner, Johnson, Niemi, Owen, L. Smith, West, and Wojahn.

**Staff:** Karen Hayes (786-7711)

**Hearing Dates:** March 5, 1991; March 6, 1991

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES**

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS**

**BACKGROUND:**

In 1977 the Legislature enacted the "Juvenile Justice Act" and subsequently passed the "Runaway Youth Act." The "Runaway Youth Act" was repealed in 1979 and replaced by the Procedures for Families in Conflict chapter.

Family Reconciliation Services was created under this chapter to provide services to runaways and to children in conflict with their families. These services are to be provided at the request of the family or in conjunction with an alternative residential placement (ARP) petition.

The Department of Social and Health Services, a parent or the child may file an ARP petition. If the child agrees to be placed outside of his or her home and a placement is available, the child is placed.

Crisis Residential Centers (CRCs) were also created under the Families in Conflict chapter. CRCs were intended to be short term placements for no longer than 72 hours, during which the CRC staff works with the family to avoid furthered or continued out-of-home placement.

In 1990 the Families in Conflict chapter was renamed the Family Reconciliation Act and provision of petitioning the courts on behalf of at-risk youth was added.

Many persons who work with at-risk youth and their families have identified the lack of services requested by the youth or family as a roadblock to successfully reuniting the family. Others question the viability of some of the publicly funded services, feel needed service alternatives are not available, and believe an evaluation of current programs is warranted.

**SUMMARY:**

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) is directed to evaluate and make recommendations on the family reconciliation services program. The Behavioral Sciences Institute homebuilders intensive in-home counseling program is expanded.

The Office of the Administrator of the Courts is requested to develop a curriculum on at-risk youth for superior court judges and court personnel. DSHS is directed to produce a videotape on at-risk youth for a variety of public agencies and the public.

DSHS shall establish an interdivisional at-risk youth committee to plan and coordinate all agency services to at-risk youth and their families. The committee is to make regular reports to the Senate Children and Family Services Committee and House of Representatives Human Services Committee. These legislative committees shall jointly appoint a 12-member, statewide, at-risk youth oversight committee to serve in an advisory capacity to the DSHS committee.

Within available funds, substance abuse evaluations shall be made available to minors upon a parent's request. The same provisions are made for evaluations for mental illness.

DSHS shall designate up to 25 existing residential treatment beds for involuntary commitment of substance abusing youth based on actual commitments by the court. DSHS shall develop treatment protocols for these youth. DSHS shall report to the Legislature on: the number of youth using these services; the treatment protocols used; the effectiveness of voluntary and involuntary treatment; and the tracking of youth in treatment over time. DSHS is also required to track youth placed in crisis residential centers through an existing

computer system. Reports to the Legislature twice a year are required.

A continuum of services pilot project is established for youth in one region to be designated by DSHS. The project shall be developed in conjunction with local government, service providers, parents and other interested persons. The project shall include: 1) family reconciliation services phase 1 and phase 2; 2) Behavioral Sciences Institute homebuilders services; 3) no more than eight family crisis residential center beds, which shall be used solely for youth referred through the Family Reconciliation Act; 4) no more than six group home and residential care beds based on need; 5) at least two beds for secure lock-up of youth who will not stay in placement on a voluntary basis; 6) aftercare for up to 50 youth leaving CRCs and up to 20 youth leaving group or residential care; 7) a tracking system developed by DSHS for use of services within the region, etc.; and 8) a DSHS evaluation of the pilot project and a report to the Legislature by December 1, 1992.

Definitions for a "minor" and a "person" are incorporated into current law dealing with treatment for alcoholism, intoxication and drug addiction. Involuntary commitment of minors for drug addiction in addition to alcoholism is provided for. Relationship of treatment needs based upon evaluation is clarified to assure minors are treated appropriately. Allowable use of secure lock-up use within the pilot project context is clarified. Reference to children in CRCs being removed for seriously assaultive or seriously destructive behavior is stricken and replaced with language referring to a condition in which a child who has taken unauthorized leave and the CRC cannot assure the child will not leave again.

The proposed study as well as the expansion of family reconciliation services, homebuilders, a pilot project and the continuing education seminar for court officials are contingent on funding being provided in the state budget.

Each section of the act must comply with federal requirements for federal funding. A conflicting part shall be inoperable with respect to the agency affected. Rules drawn to this act shall also comply with federal funding requirements.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** available

**Effective Date:** July 1, 1991

**TESTIMONY FOR:**

Support the efforts in provision of services to at-risk youth and their families. A secure lock-up facility is needed to

hold youth so the provision of services is possible to reunite the family.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST:**

The real need is to assist families and youth within the existing structure. This will require adequate funding of the service structure already in place.

**TESTIFIED (Children & Family Services):** PRO: Stephanie Carter, WAPA; Peg Marchworth, Behavior Sciences Institute; Curt Tabaka, Karen Attaway, Carol Brigham, WPC; Lonnie Johns Brown, NASW; Rosalie McHale, Governor's Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee; Laurie Lippold, Children's Home Society; CON: Verna Pettit; Dexter and Tess Colbert

**TESTIFIED (Ways & Means):** Carol Clark, Department of Social and Health Services; PRO: Brandon Rogel, Ryther Child Center; Sheila Smith, Ruth Dykeman Center; Laurie Lippold, Children's Home Society; Stephanie Carter, WAPA

**HOUSE AMENDMENT(S):**

Creation of the interdivisional at-risk youth committee and the oversight committee is removed. A therapeutic family home program is established for up to 15 youth. The required staff to child ratio in crisis residential centers (CRCs) is removed. Licensing of foster homes or group homes as CRCs is deleted. The requirement of designation of 25 existing treatment beds for involuntary commitment is removed. It is clarified that costs for involuntary commitment of minors for substance abuse shall be paid for from existing funds.

Data reporting requirements on the use of CRCs is removed. Creation of a regional pilot project is deleted. Involuntary commitment may not be used as a disposition by the court for an at-risk youth. A reference to a secure lock-up facility with regard to the pilot project is removed.

**HOUSE AMENDMENT(S) 4/25/91:**

The establishment of a therapeutic family home program is removed. Reference to violation of a court order when removing a child from a CRC to a detention center for taking unauthorized leave is deleted. The ability for a family foster home or group home to be licensed as a CRC is restored.