
SENATE BILL 6238

State of Washington

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By Senators Talmadge, Niemi, Stratton and Skratek

Read first time 01/22/92. Referred to Committee on Children & Family Services.

1 AN ACT Relating to community planning for children, youth, and
2 family services; amending RCW 74.14A.020; adding new sections to
3 chapter 74.14A RCW; adding a new section to Title 28A RCW; adding a new
4 section to chapter 43.63A RCW; adding a new section to chapter 43.70
5 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 43.41 RCW; and creating a new
6 section.

7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

8 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that a primary goal of
9 public involvement in the lives of children has been to strengthen the
10 family unit.

11 However, the legislature recognizes that traditional two-parent
12 families with one parent routinely at home are now in the minority. In
13 addition, extended family and natural community supports have eroded
14 drastically. The legislature recognizes that public policy assumptions

1 must be altered to account for this new social reality. Expanded
2 public effort to support, strengthen, and help refashion family and
3 community associations to care for children is now required of
4 government.

5 For these reasons, it is the purpose of this act to modify public
6 policy and programs to empower communities to support and respond to
7 the needs of individual families and children. The state shall focus
8 public policy on community strategies that empower families to preserve
9 and protect their children, and support alternative community
10 environments for children who are out of the care of their family.

11 **Sec. 2.** RCW 74.14A.020 and 1983 c 192 s 2 are each amended to read
12 as follows:

13 (~~The department of social and health services~~) State efforts
14 shall address the needs of children and their families, including
15 emotionally disturbed and mentally ill children, potentially dependent
16 children, and families-in-conflict by:

17 (1) Serving children and families as a unit in the least
18 restrictive setting available and in close proximity to the family
19 home, consistent with the best interests and special needs of the
20 child;

21 (2) Ensuring that appropriate social and health services are
22 provided to the family unit both prior to the removal of a child from
23 the home and after family reunification;

24 (3) Recognizing the interdependent and changing nature of families
25 and communities, building upon their inherent strengths, maintaining
26 their dignity and respect, and tailoring programs to their specific
27 circumstances;

28 (4) Developing and implementing comprehensive, preventive, and
29 early intervention social and health services which have demonstrated

1 the ability to delay or reduce the need for out-of-home placements and
2 ameliorate problems before they become chronic or severe;

3 ~~((4))~~ (5) Being sensitive to the family and community culture,
4 norms, values, and expectations, and ensuring participation of ethnic
5 minorities at all levels of planning, delivery, and evaluation efforts.
6 However, cultural sensitivity should not preclude cross cultural child
7 care or adoption arrangement where these can promote the best interests
8 of the child;

9 (6)(a) Developing coordinated social and health services which:

10 ~~((a))~~ (i) Identify problems experienced by children and their
11 families early and provide services which are adequate in availability,
12 appropriate to the situation, and effective;

13 ~~((b))~~ (ii) Seek to bring about meaningful change before family
14 situations become irreversibly destructive and before disturbed
15 psychological behavioral patterns and health problems become severe or
16 permanent;

17 ~~((c))~~ (iii) Serve children and families in their own homes thus
18 preventing unnecessary out-of-home placement or institutionalization;

19 ~~((d))~~ (iv) Focus resources on social and health problems as they
20 begin to manifest themselves rather than waiting for chronic and severe
21 patterns of illness, criminality, and dependency to develop which
22 require long-term treatment, maintenance, or custody;

23 ~~((e))~~ (v) Reduce duplication of and gaps in service delivery;

24 ~~((f))~~ (vi) Improve planning, budgeting, and communication among
25 all units of the department serving children and families; and

26 ~~((g))~~ (vii) Develop outcome standards for measuring the
27 effectiveness of social and health services for children and families.

28 (b) In developing services under this subsection, local communities
29 must be partners in planning and developing support networks that are
30 tailored to their unique needs.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** As used in this chapter, unless the
2 context indicates otherwise:

3 (1) "Department" means the department of social and health
4 services.

5 (2) "Secretary" means the secretary of the department of social and
6 health services.

7 (3) "Political subdivisions" means regional offices of state
8 agencies, school districts, recognized Indian tribes, cities, towns,
9 and counties.

10 (4) "Regional interagency council for children, youth, and
11 families" means the local authority created according to section 4 of
12 this act, and shall include citizens, consumers of services regulated
13 by this act, political subdivisions, existing childrens commissions,
14 and ethnic minorities.

15 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** (1) The department of social and health
16 services, the department of health, the department of community
17 development, and the office of the superintendent of public instruction
18 shall execute an interagency agreement to ensure the coordination of
19 their local program efforts regarding children. This agreement shall
20 recognize and give specific planning, coordination, and program
21 administration responsibilities to a system of not less than six
22 regional interagency councils for children, youth, and families. The
23 councils shall encourage the development of integrated, regionally
24 based children, youth, and family activities and services with adequate
25 local flexibility to assure families the least restrictive services
26 appropriate to their needs.

27 (2) To assure this regional system, the secretary shall assist in
28 the development of a locally controlled system of regional interagency
29 councils for children, youth, and families. As soon as possible, but

1 in no case later than, December 1, 1993, the agreement shall recognize
2 regional interagency councils for children, youth, and families
3 requested by political subdivisions that shall encompass the entire
4 state. The agreement may not recognize councils that do not include
5 the largest school district, the largest county authority
6 administering, a juvenile court, the largest health department, the
7 largest early childhood education and assistance program, and the
8 largest department regional child services office within their
9 councils' boundaries.

10 (3) The councils shall exercise the planning, coordinating, and
11 program administration functions specified by the state interagency
12 agreement in addition to other activities required by this act, and
13 shall participate in the planning process required by (chapter 326,
14 Laws of 1991 ESHB 1608, services for children).

15 (4) The secretary shall contract with the councils, on a block
16 grant basis, for the administration of an integrated program of
17 community support for children, youth, and families as soon as
18 possible, but in no case later than June 30, 1995. The contract shall
19 include state and federal funds currently appropriated for at least:

20 (a) The prevention and early intervention programs contracted with
21 private agencies on January 1, 1992;

22 (b) Consolidated juvenile services;

23 (c) All residential and foster care services; and

24 (d) Other programs as decided by law.

25 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** A new section is added to Title 28A RCW to
26 read as follows:

27 The superintendent of public instruction shall contract with the
28 councils established in section 4 of this act, on a single, block grant
29 basis, for the administration of an integrated program of community

1 support for children, youth, and families as soon as possible, but in
2 no case later than June 30, 1995. The contracts shall include state
3 and federal funds currently appropriated for at least the following
4 programs:

- 5 (1) Drug and alcohol prevention under chapter 28A.170 RCW;
- 6 (2) The Fair Start program;
- 7 (3) School psychological and social counseling services; and
- 8 (4) School health and nutrition services.

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** A new section is added to chapter 43.63A RCW
10 to read as follows:

11 The department of community development shall contract with the
12 councils established in section 4 of this act, on a single, block grant
13 basis, for the administration of an integrated program of community
14 support for children, youth, and families as soon as possible, but in
15 no case later than June 30, 1995. The contracts shall include state
16 and federal funds currently appropriated for at least the early
17 childhood education and assistance program.

18 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** A new section is added to chapter 43.70 RCW
19 to read as follows:

20 The department of health shall, with the councils established in
21 section 4 of this act, contract on a single, block grant, capitated
22 basis, for the administration of an integrated program of community
23 support for children, youth, and families as soon as possible, but in
24 no case later than June 30, 1995. The contracts shall include state
25 and federal funds currently appropriated for at least the first steps
26 program and for other health education and health promotion programs
27 where the primary target population is children.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 8.** Any state or federal funds identified
2 for contracts with councils established according to section 4 of this
3 act shall be transferred with no reductions and shall from the date of
4 transfer, receive the same cost of living adjustments that may be
5 appropriated and allocated for state employees. No political
6 subdivision or other council participant may reduce their funding for
7 children or family services below that provided on the effective date
8 of this act.

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 9.** A new section is added to chapter 43.41 RCW
10 to read as follows:

11 The office of financial management shall review the administration
12 of funds as modified by this act and shall by January 1, 1996, propose
13 legislation to complete interdepartmental transfers of funds or
14 programs needed to place all programs and funds affected by this act
15 into a single existing state agency. The proposal shall place these
16 programs in a single state agency whose statutory purpose, mission,
17 goals, and operating philosophy most closely supports the principles
18 and purposes of this act. The office of financial management may not
19 suggest the creation of a new state agency for the function unless,
20 after thorough review and documentation, the office of financial
21 management determines that no suitable state agency exists. The office
22 of financial management shall review statutes that authorize the
23 programs transferred by this act and suggest legislation to eliminate
24 statutory requirements that interfere with the administration of this
25 act. However statutes establishing state authority to set program
26 quality standards and services minimums, including priority areas for
27 minorities, may not be suggested for elimination.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 10.** Regional interagency councils for
2 children, youth, and families shall develop two-year children, youth,
3 and family plans that clearly responds to regional biennial needs
4 assessments and interagency service plans, goals of local school
5 districts, public health departments, juvenile courts and children's
6 protective services consistent with the intent and requirements of this
7 chapter. Plans shall be updated biennially and shall serve as a basis
8 for contracting according to the provisions of this act.

9 In these regional interagency service plans, the regional
10 interagency councils for children, youth, and families shall address
11 the needs of children, youth, and families by planning for access to
12 assistance that will strengthen the healthy family unit or community
13 organizations and reduce or prevent conditions that undermine families
14 or communities. Such plans shall be consistent with the requirements
15 of RCW 74.14A.020 and shall address, at a minimum, strategies to
16 increase parental involvement in child care and in developmental and
17 educational services. Such plans shall also seek to reduce the abuse
18 of alcohol and illegal substances by children and their parents, and
19 interpersonal violence and intentional injury to children.

20 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 11.** (1) The office of financial management,
21 in consultation with affected parties, shall establish a fund
22 distribution formula that reflects local needs assessments that
23 considers:

- 24 (a) The number of at-risk children;
- 25 (b) The number of children in out-of-home placements;
- 26 (c) The number of recipients of aid to families with dependent
27 children and participants in the family independence program;
- 28 (d) The number of child protective services cases ranked according
29 to risk;

- 1 (e) The rate of detention for juveniles;
- 2 (f) Social and economic indicators including poverty and hunger;
- 3 (g) The number of convictions for crimes against children;
- 4 (h) The number of convictions for crimes related to illegal drug
- 5 and alcohol use;
- 6 (i) The number of child and teenage suicides;
- 7 (j) The school dropout rate;
- 8 (k) Children's mental health needs assessments; and
- 9 (l) The number of ethnic minority persons.

10 (2) The office of financial management shall submit a proposed
11 distribution formula in accordance with this section to the legislature
12 by January 1, 1994. The formula shall also include a projection of the
13 funding allocations that will result for each local council.

14 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 12.** The implementation of regional
15 interagency councils for children, youth, and families, shall be
16 included in all federal and state plans affecting the state's children,
17 youth, and families, including at least those required by this chapter
18 and applicable federal law. These plans shall be consistent with the
19 intent and requirements of this chapter.

20 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 13.** The secretary of social and health
21 services, the director of community development, the secretary of
22 health, and the office of the superintendent of public instruction,
23 shall:

24 (1) Disburse funds for the regional interagency councils for
25 children, youth, and families that are ready to implement programs as
26 soon as possible, but in no case later than April 1, 1994;

27 (2) Enter into biennial contracts with regional interagency
28 councils for children, youth, and families to begin implementation as

1 soon as possible, and complete implementation by June 1995. The
2 contracts shall be consistent with available resources;

3 (3) By July 1, 1995, allocate one hundred percent of available
4 resources for programs regulated by this act to regional interagency
5 councils for children, youth, and families in single block grants to
6 each council. The grants shall be distributed in accordance with a
7 formula submitted to the legislature by January 1, 1994, based on the
8 distribution formula in section 11 of this act; and

9 (4) Notify regional interagency councils for children, youth, and
10 families of their allocation of available resources at least ninety
11 days before the start of a new biennial contract period.

12 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 14.** If no group of political subdivisions is
13 willing to assume powers and duties under this chapter by June 30,
14 1995, the office of financial management shall designate a single state
15 agency to do so and shall immediately transfer all funds and programs
16 specified in this chapter to that agency.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 15.** (1) The state center for children,
18 youth, and families is hereby created. The center shall serve as the
19 clearinghouse for information concerning innovations in children,
20 youth, and family issues aimed at reducing events that weaken a
21 family's ability to provide for its children and at providing care for
22 children who have no parents able or willing to provide care.
23 Information from the clearinghouse shall be available on request to the
24 children, youth, and family networks. The center shall also provide
25 technical assistance to regional interagency councils for children,
26 youth, and families on the issues of community protection and
27 prevention of violence toward children, youth, and families,
28 particularly sexual exploitation.

1 (2) The center shall review any data collected pursuant to this
2 chapter to:

3 (a) Identify high priority children, youth, and family issues that
4 require study or evaluation. Such issues may include, but are not
5 limited to:

6 (i) Evaluation of outcomes of children, youth, and family
7 interventions to assess their benefit to the people of the state;

8 (ii) Evaluation of specific population groups to identify needed
9 changes in children, youth, and family support services;

10 (iii) Evaluation of the risks and benefits of various incentives
11 aimed at individuals for both preventing family dysfunction and
12 improving community and state support for children, youth, and
13 families.

14 (b) Create a list of issues to study, specifying the objectives of
15 each study, the study timeline, the specific improvements in the
16 ability of communities to support children, youth, and families
17 expected as a result of the study, and the estimated cost of the study.
18 The list shall be submitted to the governor and the legislature as part
19 of the biennial budget process. However, no study activity may be
20 undertaken by the center without specific statutory authority and
21 budget from the legislature.

22 (3) Any data, research, or findings obtained at the center may be
23 made available to the general public, including health professionals;
24 regional interagency councils for children, youth, and families; health
25 and children, youth, and family associations; the governor;
26 professional boards; regulatory agencies; and any person or group who
27 has provided data for the center.

28 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 16.** Sections 3, 4, 8, and 10 through 15 of
29 this act are each added to chapter 74.14A RCW.