

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1827

As Reported By House Committee On:
Human Services

Title: An act relating to regional services centers for the deaf.

Brief Description: Establishing regional service centers for the deaf.

Sponsors: Representatives Bray, Cooke, Ludwig, Leonard, Springer and King.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Human Services, March 3, 1993, DPS.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Riley, Vice Chair; Cooke, Ranking Minority Member; Talcott, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Brown; Karahalios; Lisk; Padden; Patterson; Thibaudeau; and Wolfe.

Staff: Jim Erlandson (786-7093).

Background: This bill was submitted last year by the Senate but was not passed. Funding was provided however, as part of the operating budget. Service Centers have been set up and funds have been granted to provide services to the deaf and hearing impaired.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The intent of this bill is to improve and assure quality human services to deaf and hard of hearing people, by providing interpretation and information services, training, and consultative services. It also provides for coordination among public and private agencies and the deaf community. These services are to be provided by the creation of regional service centers in each of the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) regions. Each service center is required to establish regional advisory committees. The bill also establishes a state advisory board which will monitor the activities of the regional service centers.

The DSHS Office of Deaf Services, in consultation with the state advisory committee, is responsible for establishing criteria for the centers and recommending programs. It also has authority to award service contracts to the regional service centers. No appropriations are included in this bill and services are to be funded out of the departments' operating budget.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The term "hard of hearing" is added to references to the deaf. "Regional advisory board" is changed to "regional board of directors." The make-up of the regional board of directors is described and requires a majority of deaf or hard of hearing members as well as a geographic balance within the region. The requirements for meetings of the state advisory board are changed from quarterly to annually.

A list of services that may be available from the regional service centers is included in the substitute, as is the requirement that the services be communicatively accessible. The regional service centers are allowed to serve clients outside their geographic service area upon request.

Fiscal Note: Requested March 1, 1993.

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

Testimony For: The legislation would provide for improved services to the deaf and hard of hearing.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Janet Johanson, Community Service Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.