

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2186

As Reported By House Committee On:
Human Services

Title: An act relating to prevention of child abuse and neglect.

Brief Description: Establishing a healthy family home visitor program.

Sponsors: Representatives Flemming, Holm, Thibaudeau, Brown, H. Myers, Leonard, Morris and Patterson.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Human Services, January 27, 1994, DPS.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Leonard, Chair; Thibaudeau, Vice Chair; Cooke, Ranking Minority Member; Brown; Caver; Karahalios; Lisk; Patterson and Wolfe.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Talcott, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; and Padden.

Staff: Dave Knutson (786-7146).

Background: Child abuse and neglect are among the most damaging conditions children may be exposed to. Children who are abused or neglected are much more likely to do poorly in school, engage in antisocial behavior, and become involved in criminal activity. Programs which are effective in preventing child abuse and neglect can help children lead healthy and productive lives and help society avoid the cost of delinquency, poor achievement in school, and increased costs in the adult corrections system.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Washington Council for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect will operate a program to coordinate and fund up to 10 home visitor programs for families with newborns who need support based on the unique needs of each family. Parental participation in the program will be voluntary. Each program will provide visits for all expectant or new parents in the community served; screening to assess each family's strengths, goals, and areas of concern; parenting education and skills development; information and

referral; parent support groups; and service coordination for individual families.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The voluntary nature of the program is reinforced. Parents will sign a written authorization to participate in the program and may withdraw their consent to participate at any time.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Appropriation: The sum of \$1 million to the Washington Council for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect.

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

Testimony For: This is an effective way to reduce child abuse and neglect and help families raise healthy children.

Testimony Against: The state should not send people into family homes and determine what is the best way to raise children.

Witnesses: Majken Ryherd Keira, Human Services Roundtable (pro); Karen Thompson, Project Family (pro); Liz Dalton, Division of Child and Family Services, Department of Social and Health Services (pro); Ann Simons, Washington Child Abuse Prevention Association (pro); Laurie Lippold, Children's Alliance (pro); Jed Brown, The Phronesis Group (con); Katie Levans, United We Stand America (con); and Michele Smith (con).