

**SENATE BILL REPORT**

**SB 5393**

**AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES,  
FEBRUARY 26, 1993**

**Brief Description:** Providing for increased local coordination of programs for children and families.

**SPONSORS:** Senators Talmadge, Deccio, Niemi, McDonald, Owen, A. Smith, Moore, McAuliffe, Drew, Fraser, L. Smith, Snyder, Moyer, Oke and Winsley

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES**

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5393 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Talmadge, Chairman; Wojahn, Vice Chairman; Deccio, Erwin, Franklin, Fraser, Hargrove, McAuliffe, McDonald, Niemi, Quigley, Sheldon, L. Smith, and Winsley.

**Staff:** Richard Rodger (786-7461)

**Hearing Dates:** February 2, 1993; February 26, 1993

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS**

**Staff:** Mary Poole (786-7613)

**Hearing Dates:** March 4, 1993

**BACKGROUND:**

Currently, state programs targeted to children, youth and families are administered by several agencies, including the Department of Social and Health Services, the Department of Health, the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Department of Community Development.

Some groups and individuals, representing recipients of these programs and other interested parties, have indicated that a lack of coordination in planning and program administration exists. This may be resulting in an increasing number of children, youth and families not receiving full benefit from state and federal programs.

It has been suggested that a local or regional authority for program planning and administration would be more responsive to local community needs.

**SUMMARY:**

Current state programs and policies are modified to empower communities to support and respond to the needs of families and children.

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), the Department of Health (DOH), the Department of Community Development (DCD), and the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) shall execute an interagency agreement to establish regional interagency councils for children, youth and families. The agreement shall give councils authority to administer funds as enumerated in the act. The Secretary of DSHS is to assist in establishing a locally controlled system of councils to ensure coordination of local program efforts regarding children, youth and families. The system shall include not less than six regional councils.

Each council shall have, at a minimum, the largest school district, county juvenile authority, health department, early childhood education and assistance program, and children services office within its region.

No later than June 30, 1995, each department must contract with the councils, through a single block grant, to provide for regional administration of specified program funds.

Each council will prepare a two-year children, youth and families plan that responds to the needs and goals of: interagency service plans; local school districts; public health districts; juvenile courts; and Child Protective Services.

Funds for programs covered by these contracts will be transferred without reductions and will receive future cost-of-living adjustments at the same rate appropriated for state employees. No political subdivision or council participant may reduce funding below that provided on the effective date of the act.

The Office of Financial Management will review the administration of funds covered by the block grants and, by January 1, 1996, propose legislation to complete transfers of funds and programs needed to place them in a single state agency whose purpose, mission and goals closely match those of this act. Prior to January 1, 1994, OFM will submit to the Legislature a fund distribution formula that reflects local needs assessments.

The department shall develop guidelines for the screening of children in foster care and for children about to be placed in foster care. The department shall develop programs for children and youth who are in long-term out-of-home care.

Interagency councils shall agree to the shared use of local and county facilities where agency service delivery and access would be improved for residents in rural and remote areas. A pilot project to establish an intensive community-based,

family-centered program to increase family permanency is authorized in a rural county.

A department may contract out services currently provided by state employees when authorized by statute and approved by the Governor.

A state center for children, youth and families is established. It will serve as a clearinghouse for information on innovations aimed at reducing events that weaken a family's ability to provide for its children. It will also provide technical assistance to regional interagency councils on issues of community protection and prevention of violence toward children, youth and families. The center will also review and analyze data in order to identify issues for further study.

Juvenile offenders may be transferred to a structured transition program in the community under specified conditions intended to safeguard the public and accelerate the rehabilitation of the youth.

**EFFECT OF PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE:**

The proposed substitute incorporates the following changes:

Additional intent language is added to ensure that: (1) the safety and best interests of the child are the paramount considerations when making placement and service delivery decisions, and (2) all services are provided in a culturally appropriate and relevant manner.

The definition of "regional council of children, youth, and families" is modified to combine language which was located in separate sections in the original bill. In addition, the term "interagency" is removed from the definition, and Indian tribes are defined as those which are "federally" recognized. The dates for implementation of the regional councils are extended by a period of one or two years.

A Children's Services Commission is created. The commission shall be composed of 14 members, to be appointed by the Governor. The commission's membership shall include: (1) The Secretary of the Department of Social and Health Services, who shall chair the commission; (2) a citizen; (3) a youth; (4) a consumer of social services; (5) a representative of the Department of Health, the Department of Community Development, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; and (6) one representative of a county, a city, a town, a federally recognized Indian tribe, a school district, an existing children's commission, and a private agency provider of children's services.

The Governor shall ensure the racial, ethnic, and geographic diversity in the commission's membership. Members of the commission shall be reimbursed for travel expenses.

The commission shall: (a) review sections 4, 6 through 16, 18, and 20 of this act for adoption or rejection; (b) review the issues related to the creation of regional councils for children, youth, and families; (c) review the scope of the council's duties; (d) develop a list of all state and federal funded prevention and early intervention programs for children, youth, and families, including a description and current budget for each program; (e) identify programs and funds which should be transferred to the councils; (f) make recommendations on the number of regional councils that should be created and the specific boundaries for the proposed regional councils; and (g) review any other related matters as determined by the chair of the commission.

The commission shall specifically adopt or reject the provisions contained in each of the following sections of the act: Sections 4, 6 through 16, 18, and 20. If the commission rejects any of these sections, it shall identify the reasons for rejection and shall propose alternative recommendations.

The commission shall submit a preliminary report to the Legislature, by January 1, 1994, containing: (a) recommendations on the number of regional councils that should be created and the specific boundaries for the proposed regional councils; (b) a list of all state and federally funded prevention and early intervention programs for children, youth, and families, including a description and current budget for each program. The commission shall submit a final report to the House, the Senate, and the Code Reviser by January 1, 1995.

Political subdivisions shall submit requests for the creation of regional councils to the Governor along with a list of names proposed for membership consideration. The Governor shall appoint members of the regional councils for terms of three years.

If there exists any federal restrictions against the transfer of funds, for the programs enumerated in the act, the department or agency currently responsible for the administration of those funds shall apply to the federal government for waivers of the restrictions. The waiver requests shall be approved by the Office of Financial Management.

The regional council's plans shall include strategies to improve access to culturally relevant services for all racial and ethnic minorities.

The school district levy base calculations shall include any money transferred to regional councils.

The clearinghouse shall provide technical assistance to the Children's Services Commission.

Sections 4, 6 through 16, 18 and 20 of this act shall not take effect unless adopted by the Children's Services Commission, in the commission's report due January 1, 1995. Every section

adopted in the commission's report shall take effect on July 1, 1995. If the commission fails to adopt or reject any of these enumerated sections, those sections shall take effect on July 1, 1995.

An emergency clause accelerating the effective date is added for section 5 of the act (the creation of the Children's Services Commission).

Several sections of the original bill were stricken: (1) The limitation on contracting out services currently provided by state employees, and (2) the creation of a juvenile structured transition program.

**Appropriation:** \$150,000

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** requested February 1, 1993

**TESTIMONY FOR:**

**TESTIMONY AGAINST:**

**TESTIFIED:** Peter Berliner, Children's Alliance; Gail Gosney, Children's Alliance; Lonnie Johns-Brown, WAEYC, WSCAP (pro); Donna Deleno, WAEYC, WSCAP (pro); Lois Smith, Juvenile Court Administrators; Larry Fehr, WCCD (pro); Teresa Rafael, Children's Home Society; Peggy Mihata, DCD (pro); Sharon Schauss, Tacoma School District (con); Sue Butkus, WSFNC; Darlene Flowers, FPAWS, (pro); Bev Hermanson, WFSE, (con); Ken Kanikeberg, OSPI (con); Jean Soliz, DSHS (pro); Maxine Hayes, DOH (pro); Joan Yoshitomi, Seattle School District; Judy Turpin, Childhaven; Sue Hutchins, WALWICA; Donna Oberg, WALWICA.