

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1339

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to juvenile services.

Brief Description: Revising provisions relating to juvenile probation and detention services.

Sponsors: Representatives Ballasiotes, Morris, Costa, Carlson and Conway.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Corrections: 1/30/96, 2/1/96 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/7/96, 84-14.

Senate Amended.

House Concurred.

Passed Legislature.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Ballasiotes, Chairman; Blanton, Vice Chairman; Sherstad, Vice Chairman; Quall, Ranking Minority Member; Tokuda, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Koster; Radcliff; Schoesler and D. Sommers.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Cole and Dickerson.

Staff: Rick Neidhardt (786-7841).

Background: Under current law, each county superior court has initial responsibility for administering the county's juvenile court, probation services, and detention services.

The law provides a procedure for transferring administration of these services to the county's legislative authority (usually called the board of county commissioners). This transfer can occur only if the superior court adopts a court rule and enters an agreement with the county's legislative authority.

Summary of Bill: Initial responsibility for administering county juvenile court, probation, and detention services remains with the local superior courts. One change, however, is made to the provisions addressing the transfer of these responsibilities. When a consortium of three or more counties, located in eastern Washington and having a combined population in excess of 530,000, jointly operates a juvenile correctional facility, the county legislative authorities may adopt ordinances prescribing for alternative administration of the facility. Under these specific circumstances, the agreement of the local superior courts is not required for the transfer to occur.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Counties are better situated than superior courts for efficiently securing services at a reasonable cost. Allowing these transfers will avoid appearance of fairness problems where probation counselors are recommending sentences to judges when judges pay the probation counselors. County control makes for better coordination with other county services, including providing for better coordination between juvenile offender services and youth-at-risk services. Transfers can already occur under current law, this just allows them to happen more easily.

Testimony Against: Probation and detention are judicial responsibilities. Detention facilities have education and rehabilitation programs that require judicial administration. Juvenile court services, including probation and detention, are more easily delivered if they are all administered by the same entity, which now is the superior court.

Testified: Roseanne Bruckner, Superior Court Judges' Association (con); and Jay Webber, Washington State Association of Counties (pro). (Testimony was given during a public hearing on this bill during the 1995 session.)