

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1719

As Reported By House Committee On: Children & Family Services

Title: An act relating to the office of inspector general within the department of social and health services.

Brief Description: Creating the office of inspector general within the department of social and health services.

Sponsors: Representatives Boldt, Koster, Cooke, Carlson, Stevens, Benton, Dyer, Padden and Thompson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Children & Family Services: 2/23/95, 2/28/95 [DPS].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Cooke, Chairman; Lambert, Vice Chairman; Stevens, Vice Chairman; Thibaudeau, Ranking Minority Member; Brown, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Boldt; Buck; Carrell; Padden; Patterson and Tokuda.

Staff: David Knutson (786-7146).

Background: The Department of Social and Health Services investigates fraud in the aid to families with dependent children program and food stamp program through the Office of Special Investigations. The Office of Special Investigations uses the fraud early detection process to investigate applicants and recipients who provide information during the application and recertification processes that contains apparent discrepancies. The Office of Special Investigations also provides a welfare fraud hotline used to report people suspected of fraud and abuse. The Office of Special Investigations also provides general investigations covering all department programs, and a special investigative unit that investigates allegations against department employees who are suspected of criminal or administrative misconduct.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Office of Inspector General is created in the Department of Social and Health Services. The Inspector General will investigate

allegations of abuse and fraud in the department's programs, except for provider fraud related to the medicaid program. An annual report will be made to the Legislature on the activities of the Inspector General. The Inspector General is appointed by the Governor and can be removed from office by the Governor.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The annual report will also include a description of significant deficiencies uncovered by the Inspector General and a review of recommendations and related corrective actions.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on July 1, 1995.

Testimony For: Fraud investigations need a higher priority and visibility within the Department of Social and Health Services.

Testimony Against: The Washington State Patrol, not the Department of Social and Health Services, should be the organizational location for the Inspector General.

Testified: John Bumford, Charles Brigham, Darrel Trotter, John Thompson, and Bruce Hume, Office of Special Investigations, Department of Social and Health Services (pro); Kathy Mix and Greg Canova, Attorney General's Office (pro); Marilyn Gunther, Coalition of Concerned Citizens (con); and Rick Jensen, Washington State Patrol Trooper's Association (con).