

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 1756

As Amended by Senate

Title: An act relating to dependent children.

Brief Description: Changing provisions relating to dependent children.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Children & Family Services (originally sponsored by Representatives Veloria, Cooke, Cody, Lambert, Thibaudeau, Patterson and Costa).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Children & Family Services: 2/24/95, 2/28/95 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/8/95, 98-0.

Senate Amended.

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: If a child is found dependent by the court, the child may be placed with a relative or in a foster care home. Court hearings related to the child's dependency are closed to the general public and the judge may allow a relative caring for the child or the child's foster parent to attend and provide information about the child to the court. Permanency planning options include returning the child home, adoption, guardianship, or long-term relative or foster care placement.

Summary of Bill: The court is required to allow relatives or foster parents caring for a dependent child to attend court proceedings and provide the court with information and evidence about the child to the court, unless the court states on the record why the person should not be allowed to attend.

EFFECT OF SENATE AMENDMENT(S):

All relatives of a child alleged or found to be dependent will be allowed to attend all court hearings and proceedings related to the child.

If the court orders a child removed from the family home, preference will be given to and out-of-home placement with a relative.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested February 16, 1995.

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

Testimony For: Grandparents raising their grandchildren are often excluded from court proceedings related to the child's dependency. Grandparents should have greater rights when they are raising their grandchildren.

Testimony Against: The court should be allowed to exclude some people from court proceedings on a case by case basis.

Testified: Representative Velma Veloria, prime sponsor; Rosie Oreskovich, Department of Social and Health Services (concerns); Margaret Casey, Washington State Catholic Conference (concerns); Darlene Flowers, Foster Parents Association of Washington State (pro); Vivian L. and John B. Weers, Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (pro); Judy Chinn, Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (pro); and Martin Hysong (pro).

Votes on Final Passage:

Yeas 98