

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 6392

As Reported By House Committee On:
Children & Family Services

Title: An act relating to licensed overnight youth shelters.

Brief Description: Providing financial support to licensed overnight youth shelters.

Sponsors: Senators Strannigan, Long, West and Oke.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Children & Family Services: 2/24/98, 2/26/98 [DPA].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Cooke, Chairman; Boldt, Vice Chairman; Bush, Vice Chairman; Tokuda, Ranking Minority Member; Kastama, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Ballasiotes; Carrell; Dickerson; Gombosky; McDonald and Wolfe.

Staff: Douglas Ruth (786-7134).

Background: Overnight youth shelters provide temporary food and housing to homeless or runaway youth who have no other place to stay. These shelters are required to be licensed by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). In order to be licensed, the shelters must meet minimum requirements necessary to ensure the health and safety of the youth staying in the shelters.

Summary of Amended Bill: A grant program is created in the Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development to provide grants to licensed overnight youth shelters. The department is appropriated \$120,000 for the purpose of assisting overnight youth shelters to meet DSHS licensing requirements. Grants are limited to \$20,000 per year for each shelter and may only be provided to licensed nonprofit shelters.

An intent section expresses the concern that it is costly for shelters to meet licensing requirements. The section explains that state assistance for these shelters may enable the shelters to leverage local and private funds.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: Eligibility for a grant is expanded from currently licensed shelters to all licensed shelters, including those that may become licensed in the future.

Appropriation: \$120,000.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: There are presently five shelters in the state. The shelters are not Crisis Residential Centers (CRC's). Unlike CRC's, these facilities do not receive state funds. They are mostly funded by a patchwork of private funding. But because they do not have sufficient funds, many cannot run at full capacity or year-round. The shelters play an important role in the protection of runaway and at-risk youth. Many of these youth would enter into the Becca system or juvenile justice system if they were not given shelter in one of these facilities.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Gary Strannigan, prime sponsor; Anne O'Leary, Denny Place Youth Shelter (pro); Mary E. Hufferd, Oasis Teen Shelter (Skagit Homeless Youth) (pro); and Margaret Casey, Washington State Catholic Conference (pro).