

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## 2SHB 1862

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**As Passed House**

March 17, 1997

**Title:** An act relating to community-based alternative response systems.

**Brief Description:** Requiring a community-based response system for certain families referred to child protective services.

**Sponsors:** By House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Cooke, Dickerson, Boldt and McDonald).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Children & Family Services: 2/21/97, 2/28/97 [DPS];  
Appropriations: 3/8/97 [DP2S(w/o sub CFS)].

**Floor Activity:**

Passed House: 3/17/97, 98-0.

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### 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; Boldt, Vice Chairman; Bush, Vice Chairman; Tokuda, Ranking Minority Member; Kastama, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Ballasiotes; Carrell; Dickerson; Gombosky; McDonald and Wolfe.

**Staff:** David Knutson (786-7146).

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

**Majority Report:** The second substitute bill be substituted therefor and the second substitute bill do pass and do not pass the substitute bill by Committee on Children & Family Services. Signed by 31 members: Representatives Huff, Chairman; Alexander, Vice Chairman; Clements, Vice Chairman; Wensman, Vice Chairman; H. Sommers, Ranking Minority Member; Doumit, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Gombosky, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Benson; Carlson; Chopp; Cody; Cooke; Crouse; Dyer; Grant; Keiser; Kenney; Kessler; Lambert; Linville;

Lisk; Mastin; McMorris; Parlette; Poulsen; Regala; D. Schmidt; Sehlin; Sheahan; Talcott and Tokuda.

**Staff:** Jason Hall (786-7145).

**Background:** The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) uses a risk assessment matrix for screening reports of child abuse and neglect. The risk assessment matrix uses a five point scale for ranking reports. A score of five is the most serious report; a score of one, the least important. The department currently screens out reports with a score of three or lower. Screened-out cases do not typically receive services from the department. In some limited areas, the department does offer services to families that are screened-out.

**Summary of Bill:** The DSHS will create a community-based alternative response system for low-risk families who are screened-out by the risk assessment process. Services will be provided through contracts with community-based organizations.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on July 1, 1997.

**Testimony For:** (Children & Family Services) Other states have instituted alternative response systems for low-risk child abuse referrals and have reduced further abuse. This is a cost-effective targeted prevention strategy.

(Appropriations) This bill will cover low-risk cases that often deteriorate and enter the child protective services (CPS) system later with a higher cost attached. The bill also reduces the number of re-referrals to CPS for suspected abuse or neglect. This is modeled on the South King County program which is successful. It is a small price to pay for extension of the program statewide.

**Testimony Against:** ( Children & Family Services) None presented.

(Appropriations) None.

**Testified:** (Children & Family Services) Priscilla Martens, Behavioral Sciences Institute (pro); Seth Dawson, Common Ground for Children (pro); Elmira Forner, Catholic Community Services (pro); Alice Probert, Catholic Community Services (pro); and Janet Hedgepath, Catholic Community Services (pro).

(Appropriations) Representative Suzette Cooke, prime sponsor; Margaret Casey, Washington State Catholic Conference; and Jennifer Strus, Department of Social and Health Services.