

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1968

As Reported By House Committee On:

Children & Family Services

Title: An act relating to commitment placements for juvenile offenders.

Brief Description: Prohibiting juvenile offenders from being placed in contact with nonoffenders in residential facilities.

Sponsors: Representatives Wolfe, Gombosky, Tokuda, Kastama, Blalock, Gardner, Cooke, Cole and Anderson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Children & Family Services: 2/27/97, 3/4/97 [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; 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).

Background: Crisis residential centers provide short-term emergency housing for runaway and at-risk youth who have experienced a family conflict and left their home. The crisis residential center provides assessment and counseling services designed to resolve the family conflict and return the child home. Stays in crisis residential centers are limited by law to five days. The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) has attempted to misuse crisis residential centers in the past by attempting to place dependent children and children on parole status from the Division of Juvenile Rehabilitation in crisis residential centers.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Division of Juvenile Rehabilitation within the DSHS is prohibited from placing, or attempting to place, juveniles on parole status in crisis residential centers. The Division of Children and Family Services and the Division of Juvenile Rehabilitation within the DSHS will transfer funds and

responsibilities for juvenile offenders who need residential placements. The transfer will be completed by March 1, 1998.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Language is added requiring the Division of Children and Family Services and the Division of Juvenile Rehabilitation within the DSHS to transfer funds and responsibilities for juvenile offenders who need residential placements. The transfer will be completed by March 1, 1998.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: The Division of Juvenile Rehabilitation tries to place juvenile offenders on parole status in foster homes or crisis residential centers with children who are abused or neglected, or have run away from home. This is very dangerous to place adjudicated offenders in the same facility with children who are victims.

Testimony Against: The Division of Juvenile Rehabilitation needs to place juvenile offenders somewhere. It is difficult to find placements for juvenile offenders who are released from institutions.

Testified: Representative Cathy Wolfe; Charles Shelan, Community Youth Services (pro); Linda Lillevik, King County Public Defenders (pro); and Sid Sidorowicz, Department of Social and Health Services (con).