

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5008

As Reported By House Committee On:

Children & Family Services

Title: An act relating to modification of the adoption support reconsideration program.

Brief Description: Modifying the adoption support reconsideration program.

Sponsors: Senators Long, Hargrove, Franklin, Zarelli and Winsley; by request of Department of Social and Health Services.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Children & Family Services: 3/27/97, 3/28/97 [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: David Knutson (786-7146).

Background: The Department of Social and Health Services operates an adoption reconsideration program for adoptive parents who need assistance with expenses relating to medical or psychological problems of their adopted child.

A family may seek assistance in the payment of physician or provider services for a child who meets specified criteria. To qualify for the assistance, the adopted child must: (1) have been in state-funded foster care prior to the adoption; (2) have a physical, mental or emotional condition which existed and was documented prior to the adoption; and (3) reside in Washington State with an adoptive parent who cannot afford the expenses related to the child's special needs.

The medical needs of the child are reviewed and approved by the department's Office of Personal Health Services. The department may pay up to \$20,000 per child for medical services related to the child's special needs.

Summary of Amended Bill: The eligibility criteria for the adoption reconsideration program is expanded, to allow for payment of expenses for children who are at high risk of physical, mental or emotional problems as a result of conditions exposed to prior to the adoption. Also, children who were in a preadoptive placement funded by the DSHS are eligible for adoption reconsideration support. The needs of the child no longer require review and approval by the Office of Personal Health Services.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: Children in preadoptive placements funded by the DSHS are included in the eligible population.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: The DSHS supports this modification to the adoption reconsideration program. This will help families who adopt special needs children.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Jennifer Strus, Department of Social and Health Services (pro).