

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## EHB 1496

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Human Services & Corrections, April 1, 1997

**Title:** An act relating to the definition of negligent treatment of a child.

**Brief Description:** Clarifying the definition of "negligent treatment or maltreatment" of a child.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Benson, Cooke, Mulliken, Dunshee, Linville, Sheahan, Gombosky, Carrell, Sterk, McMorris and Kastama.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Human Services & Corrections: 3/27/97, 4/1/97 [DP].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Long, Chair; Zarelli, Vice Chair; Franklin, Hargrove, Kohl, Schow and Stevens.

**Staff:** Richard Rodger (786-7461)

**Background:** Certain persons are obligated to report whenever they have reason to believe a child, adult dependent person, or disabled person has suffered abuse or neglect. Those required to report abuse or neglect include medical personnel, school personnel, counselors, child care providers, employees of the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), and law enforcement personnel. The report of such belief is to be made to a law enforcement agency or DSHS. As a consequence of such a report, an investigation may be undertaken, and if abuse or neglect is found, removal of the victim, imposition of restraining orders, and other procedures may follow. The matter may be referred for possible criminal charges or dependency proceedings.

For purposes of this reporting requirement, abuse or neglect includes negligent treatment, or maltreatment of a child.— Negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child is defined as a serious disregard of the consequences of an act or omission that amounts to a clear and present danger— to a child's health, welfare, and safety.

**Summary of Bill:** The definition of negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child— for purposes of the mandatory reporting statute is amended. The term does not, in and of itself, include situations in which siblings share a bedroom because of the financial situation of the parent.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For:** Parents should not have their children taken from them because they share a bedroom.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Representative Benson, prime sponsor (pro).