

SENATE BILL REPORT

2SHB 1864

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Human Services & Corrections, April 3, 1997

Title: An act relating to prevention and early intervention.

Brief Description: Regarding infants who test positive at birth for drugs or alcohol.

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

Brief History:

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

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Long, Chair; Franklin, Hargrove and Kohl.

Staff: Richard Rodger (786-7461)

Background: Administrators of hospitals and similar institutions and physicians are authorized to detain children if they believe the child would be in imminent danger if returned to the care and custody of the parent, guardian, custodian, or other person legally responsible for the child.

Summary of Amended Bill: If a baby is born addicted to alcohol or drugs, the administrator of a hospital or similar institution, nurse practitioners, and physicians are required to detain the baby. The baby may be held at a hospital, pediatric interim care facility, or similar program. Law enforcement or the Department of Social and Health Services must be notified within 14 days that the child is being held. Child Protective Services must refer mothers of detained babies to appropriate mandatory treatment programs. Babies needing drug withdrawal are supervised by licensed health care professionals.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: Notification is made within 14 days instead of 72 hours.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on July 1, 1997. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

Testimony For: Early detection and treatment of drug-affected infants is necessary. Treatment also needs to be offered to the drug-addicted mothers. One woman has given

birth to 20 drug-affected infants. This is a very serious problem which must be addressed. Some hospitals are sending infants home with the mother and allowing the mother to administer morphine to the infant.

Testimony Against: The state cannot use federal Title IV-B2 dollars to fund this program. An evaluation of existing programs should be conducted before this expansion should take place.

Testified: Rep. Cooke (prime sponsor); Ken Stark, DASA, DSHS (concerns); Jennifer Strus, DSHS (concerns); Linda Grant, Association of Alcoholism and Addiction Programs (concerns); Judy Turpin, NWWLC (pro); Margaret Casey, WSCC; Barbara Drennen, Pediatric Interim Care Facility.