

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2589

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Health & Long-Term Care, February 24, 1998

Title: An act relating to eligibility for temporary assistance for needy families.

Brief Description: Requiring disclosure of the names of both parents of children as a condition of eligibility for temporary assistance for needy families.

Sponsors: House Committee on Children & Family Services (originally sponsored by Representatives Boldt, Cooke, McDonald, Bush, Clements and Schoesler).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 2/20/98, 2/24/98 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Deccio, Chair; Wood, Vice Chair; Benton, Franklin and Strannigan.

Staff: Joanne Conrad (786-7472)

Background: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients are required to identify the noncustodial or absent parent, in order to facilitate child support enforcement action. The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), by rule, allows for "good cause" refusal to name the parent. "Good cause" generally includes situations where the child or the custodial parent may be harmed if the parent is named.

Summary of Amended Bill: TANF eligibility is conditioned upon establishing paternity for a child receiving assistance. A "good cause" exemption from this requirement, based upon current regulatory practice, is specified in statute, for cases where parental identification would be detrimental to the child, as established by court, medical, criminal, child protective services, social services, psychological or law enforcement records. In addition, DSHS has judgmental discretion to investigate the basis for a claim of good cause.—

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: The good cause— exemption to the requirement that paternity be established is based upon current regulatory standards, which provide for avoidance of harm to the child or custodial parent corroborated by various proofs and also allowing for discretionary investigation by DSHS.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: The regulatory good cause– exemption is too broad and discretionary. This bill would allow for identification of those who need help.

Testimony Against: DSHS already has a fair and reasonable regulatory good cause– process. Victims should not be burdened with disclosure. The current administrative procedure works.

Testified: Representative Marc Boldt, original prime sponsor; Elizabeth Morgan, DSHS; Judy Turpin, NW Women’s Law Center; Sharon Case, Washington Coalition Against Domestic Violence.