

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5008

As Passed Senate, February 19, 1997

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: Human Services & Corrections: 1/21/97, 1/22/97 [DP].
Passed Senate, 2/19/97, 47-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

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

Staff: Richard Rodger (786-7461)

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 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. The needs of the child no longer require review and approval by the office of personal health services.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: An expansion of the adoption reconsideration program would allow certain adoptive parents to obtain needed support for their children who were at high risk at the time of adoption. There have been several adopted children who have fetal alcohol syndrome, a condition that was not diagnosed at the time of their adoption.

The department expects the cost of this legislation to be approximately \$12,000 per year.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Jennifer Strus, DSHS (pro); Chris Robinson, DSHS (pro).