

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5578

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Human Services & Corrections, February 27, 1997

Title: An act relating to technical clarifying changes to the family reconciliation act.

Brief Description: Concerning the placement and custody of at-risk youth.

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

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services & Corrections: 2/11/97, 2/27/97 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5578 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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

Staff: Richard Rodger (786-7461)

Background: In the past two legislative sessions, the Legislature passed two major bills concerning treatment and processes for assisting at-risk and runaway youth. Those bills are known as the Becca Bill and Becca Too.

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) has suggested various technical and clarifying amendments to the Becca bills.

When a law enforcement officer takes a child into custody, the officer must take the child to the parents, a crisis residential center (CRC), or DSHS. Upon the parent's request, the officer may take the child to a family member, responsible adult, CRC, DSHS, or a licensed youth shelter.

If no parent is available or willing to remove a child from a CRC within five days, DSHS must consider filing a child in need of services (CHINS) petition.

In a CHINS proceeding, the court may order the department to submit a dispositional plan that addresses the needs of the child.

Summary of Substitute Bill: A definition for a "staff secure" group care facility is created. The facility has a staffing ratio of one adult to every two children.

After an officer brings a child to DSHS, the department may place the child in a CRC or out-of-home placement for up to 72 hours, excluding weekends and holidays.

The department must consider filing a CHINS petition for a child if no parent has taken the child from a CRC within the first 72 hours.

In a CHINS proceeding, the court may order a dispositional plan to be prepared that addresses the needs of the child. The plan must address the needs of the parents if the parents agree or if an out-of-home placement has been ordered at the request of the child or department, otherwise the plan may only recommend voluntary services for the parents.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The authority of law enforcement to take a child to a person or agency other than a parent, a crisis residential center, or to the department is removed.

The provision is modified that required the dispositional plan to address the needs of the family.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: These changes will make it easier for law enforcement to find a place for runaway children. The DSHS needs the ability to file a CHINS petition earlier when a child has been in a CRC for 72 hours. The dispositional plan should address the needs of the whole family.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Jennifer Strus, DSHS (pro).