
HOUSE BILL 2605

State of Washington

55th Legislature

1998 Regular Session

By Representatives O'Brien, Ballasiotes, Radcliff, Benson, Constantine, Cooper, Lantz, Robertson, Hatfield, Hankins, Scott, Dunn, Backlund, Costa, McDonald, Mitchell, Thompson, Quall and Delvin

Read first time 01/16/98. Referred to Committee on Criminal Justice & Corrections.

1 AN ACT Relating to safety of group homes; and adding new sections
2 to chapter 74.13 RCW.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) Before placing a group home in a
5 community, the department must hold a public hearing on the subject of
6 the placement of the group home in order to allow the community to
7 comment on the issue. The type of notice required of the department is
8 the same notice that is required by the local municipality or county of
9 developers who build in the municipality or county. The process must
10 provide for broad dissemination of proposals and alternatives, public
11 meetings after community notification, opportunity for written public
12 comments, and consideration of and response to public comments.

13 (2) Before the department places a group home in an area, the local
14 legislative authority must establish community councils of concerned
15 citizens to monitor and provide input on the decisions surrounding the
16 placement of a group home. These community councils shall work with
17 the local police agencies and the operators of the group homes to help
18 lessen any negative impacts the placement of the facilities might have
19 on the neighborhoods in which they are located. One of the principle

1 functions of the councils will be to improve communications between the
2 group home operators and neighborhood organizations. The community
3 councils will have the final authority, based on an examination of
4 juvenile criminal history, as to whether or not particular persons are
5 admitted to the group homes in their respective neighborhoods.

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The department must by rule adopt strict
7 security requirements for staff who work at group homes. In no event
8 may a person who has a felony conviction within the past five years be
9 allowed to work at or staff a group home.

10 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) All group homes must meet at least the
11 following minimum security requirements:

12 (a) Have an alarm system designed to monitor residents and notify
13 the staff and local police if there has been an escape or if a resident
14 has taken an unauthorized leave of the premises;

15 (b) Have video cameras that monitor the exterior of the premises
16 twenty-four hours a day; and

17 (c) Have doors and windows that are in good condition and have
18 operative locks.

19 (2) Local police agencies may make unannounced visits to group
20 homes to check security and check the treatment and status of the
21 occupants.

22 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** The division of juvenile rehabilitation must
23 create a program that allows for the immediate retrieval of a juvenile
24 offender's information and records between the department, the group
25 home staff, the local police department, other police departments in
26 Washington state or any other states that have had contact with the
27 juvenile offender, the current and former school districts attended by
28 the resident, any juvenile courts that have had contact with the
29 resident, and any correctional facilities that have had custody of the
30 resident.

31 The primary purpose of the information sharing program is to allow
32 all interested parties to have full access to the resident's arrest and
33 conviction information in order to determine if the resident meets the
34 criteria for admission to a group home, or if the resident's record
35 indicates that he or she should be placed in a more secure facility in
36 order to safeguard the community.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** Sections 1 through 4 of this act are each
2 added to chapter 74.13 RCW.

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