

6208-S

Sponsor(s): Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections
(originally sponsored by Senators Hargrove, Long, Franklin, Winsley
and Oke)

Brief Title: Revising procedures for at-risk youth.

SB 6208-S - DIGEST

(DIGEST AS ENACTED)

Provides that any county or group of counties may make application to the department of social and health services in the manner and form prescribed by the department to administer and provide the services established under RCW 13.32A.197. Any such application must include a plan or plans for providing such services to at-risk youth.

Declares that it is the purpose of this chapter to assure that minors in need of mental health care and treatment receive an appropriate continuum of culturally relevant care and treatment, including prevention and early intervention, self-directed care, parent-directed care, and involuntary treatment.

Declares that it is the purpose of this act to assure the ability of parents to exercise reasonable, compassionate care and control of their minor children when there is a medical necessity for treatment and without the requirement of filing a petition under chapter 71.34 RCW.

Revises provisions relating to voluntary mental health outpatient treatment.

Designates procedures for voluntary mental health inpatient treatment.

Provides for parent-initiated mental health treatment.

Revises provisions relating to chemical dependency treatments.

Finds that predatory individuals, such as drug dealers, sexual marauders, and panderers, provide shelter to at-risk youth as a means of preying upon them and that it is important to the safety of Washington's youth that they be prevented from coming in contact with these predatory individuals.

Declares an intent to use punitive measures to create a clear disincentive for predatory individuals intending to take advantage of at-risk youth.

Declares an intent that all persons be required to report the location of a runaway minor, but that those individuals who fail to make such a report because they wish to have the minor remain unlocated as a means of preying upon them be punished for their failure to report the child's location.

VETO MESSAGE ON SB 6208-S

April 2, 1998

To the Honorable President and Members,
The Senate of the State of Washington
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am returning herewith, without my approval as to sections 2,

3, 5, 10, 41 and 42, Substitute Senate Bill 6208 entitled:
"AN ACT Relating to at-risk youth;"

This bill clarifies the processes for the admission of a child for mental health or chemical dependency treatment. It clearly separates the procedures for voluntary outpatient and inpatient treatment, parent-initiated treatment and court-authorized involuntary treatment. Safeguards are provided for inpatient mental health and chemical dependency treatment, including an independent review by a mental health or chemical dependency professional, the opportunity for a child to petition the court for review, and automatic release from a facility unless a court allows the child to be retained for further treatment.

Sections 2, 3 and 5 relate to the Department of Social and Health Services contracting with counties for the operation of staff secure group homes. Section 2 would require DSHS to transfer funds to counties to operate these homes based on a formula that is inconsistent with other formulae related to at-risk youth. Section 3 would incorrectly change state child welfare duties to include providing funding to counties to staff these homes. Section 5 apparently would require counties, which would be subcontracting with the state, to in turn subcontract with private vendors to provide staff secure group homes for certain youth. DSHS already contracts for such services, so that section is unnecessary.

Section 10 would require DSHS to report to the Legislature annually on the number of parent-initiated admissions of minors to evaluation and treatment facilities. A costly hospital record review would be needed to gather such information, but no funding was provided.

Sections 41 and 42 would amend the law relating to unlawful harboring of a minor child. The language is redundant with existing law and may lump together effective shelters for youth with those individuals who prey upon them.

For these reasons, I have vetoed sections 2, 3, 5, 10, 41 and 42 of Substitute Senate Bill No. 6208.

With the exception of sections 2, 3, 5, 10, 41 and 42, Substitute Senate Bill No. 6208 is approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Gary Locke
Governor