

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESB 6555

As Passed House - Amended:

March 8, 2000

Title: An act relating to the evaluations of foster children for long-term needs.

Brief Description: Ordering a study of evaluations of children needing long-term care.

Sponsors: Senators Long, Hargrove, Patterson, Costa, Eide, Winsley and Kohl-Welles.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Children & Family Services: 2/23/00, 2/24/00 [DPA].

Floor Activity:

Passed House - Amended: 2/29/00, 97-0.

Senate Refused to Concur.

House Receded.

House Amended.

Passed House: 3/8/00, 98-0.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill (As Amended by House Committee)

- Requires the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to report to the Legislature information about evaluations of children entering foster care.
- Requires the DSHS to make the appropriate number of referrals to the foster care assessment program.
- Requires the DSHS to accomplish these tasks within existing resources.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 10 members: Representatives D. Sommers, Republican Co-Chair; Tokuda, Democratic Co-Chair; Boldt, Republican Vice Chair; Kagi, Democratic Vice Chair; Campbell; Carrell; Dickerson; Eickmeyer; Kastama and Pflug.

Staff: Deborah Frazier (786-7152).

Background:

Current law requires that the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) evaluate all children entering the foster care system within 30 days of placement to identify long-term needs.

The Foster Care Assessment Program, administered by Harborview Medical Center, conducts comprehensive assessments of health and development for children in foster care. The assessments help determine service needs and provide a baseline against which to measure progress. The program operates under contract with the DSHS, and has the capacity to conduct approximately 350 assessments per year.

Summary of Amended Bill:

Requires the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to report to the Legislature information about evaluations of children entering foster care. Requires the DSHS to make the appropriate number of referrals to the foster care assessment program. Requires the DSHS to accomplish these tasks within existing resources.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: The bill is supported because it emphasizes the needs of the children.

Testimony Against: The bill requires the department to report retroactively to 1994. If that requirement is lifted, the majority of the department's concerns with the bill are alleviated.

Testified: (In support) Senator Long, prime sponsor; and Laurie Lippold, Children's Home Society.

(Concerns) Jake Romo, Department of Social and Health Services.