

HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS

HB 1866

Title: *An act relating to shelter care; and amending RCW 13.34.060.*

Brief Description: *Changing shelter care provisions to favor placing a child with a relative.*

Sponsors: *Representatives McMorris, Tokuda, Boldt, Sump, D. Sommers and Campbell.*

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

Meeting Date: *February 18, 1999.*

Bill Analysis Prepared by: *Marilee Scarbrough (786-7196).*

Background: Current law provides that a child taken into custody pursuant to a court order because the child's health, safety or welfare is endangered, or because of a report of abuse or neglect must be placed in shelter care. Shelter care is defined as temporary physical care in a licensed facility or in a home not required to be licensed. The current statute also provides that children can not be held longer than seventy two hours, unless directed to do so by court order. The statute does not contain specific provisions encouraging or requiring the Department to place the child with a relative.

Summary of Bill: This bill requires the Department to attempt to place a child taken into custody with a relative. The child must be comfortable with the relative and the relative must be willing to take the child. Placement with a relative is not required if the safety or welfare of the child would be jeopardized or if placement would hinder efforts to reunite the parent and child. The department must document its efforts to place the child with a relative.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: None.

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