HOUSE BILL REPORT
HB 2610

As Reported By House Committee On:
Children & Family Services

Title: An act relating to residential services for children.

Brief Description: Ordering a study of residential services for children.

Sponsors: Representatives Dickerson, Ogden, McMorris, Doumit, Clements, Tokuda, D. Sommers, H. Sommers, Alexander, Kenney, Haigh and O'Brien.

Brief History:
  Committee Activity:
      Children & Family Services: 1/24/00, 2/3/00 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

· Directs the Washington State Institute for Public Policy to conduct a study of residential services provided to children in the care of the Children's Administration.

· The study will report the numbers and percentages of children served, unit costs and total expenditures by type of residential setting. Similar information will be reported for prevention services.

· The bill makes an appropriation of $175,000.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives D. Sommers, Republican Co-Chair; Tokuda, Democratic Co-Chair; Boldt, Republican Vice Chair; Kagi, Democratic Vice Chair; Campbell; Carrell; Dickerson; Eickmeyer and Kastama.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Pflug.

Staff: Deborah Frazier (786-7152).

Background:

The Children's Administration of the Department of Social and Health Services provides residential care to nearly 17,000 children who are served by foster parents and group care facilities licensed by the administration. The administration licenses over 4,200 Children's Administration foster homes, over 1,700 private agency foster homes, and over 125 larger group facilities. Each month, approximately 7,500 children are in paid out-of-home care, and an additional 2,400 children are with relatives.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The bill directs the Washington State Institute for Public Policy to conduct a study of residential services provided to children in the care of the Children's Administration. The settings to be studied must include at least: foster care, group care, institutional care, relative placement, and transitional living services for older teens. The study will report the numbers and percentages of children served, unit costs, and total expenditures by type of setting. Best practices of other states will be reviewed with regard to prevention services and residential placement. The bill makes an appropriation of $175,000.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The original bill directed the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) to conduct a study of the types of residential services provided to children in the care of the Children's Administration. An appropriation of $250,000 was made to accomplish the tasks of the study.

The substitute directs the Washington State Institute for Public Policy to conduct the study. The settings to be studied are delineated, and must include at least: foster care, group care, institutional care, relative placement, and transitional living services for older teens. The appropriation is reduced to $175,000.

Appropriation: The sum of $175,000.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This study would help policymakers and others understand the current system and identify possible improvements to the system.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: (In support) Representative Mary Lou Dickerson, prime sponsor; Laurie Lippold, Children's Home Society; Paul Barry, Children's Alliance; Donna Christenson, Catholic Community Services; and Jean Wells, League of Women Voters.

(In support with comments) Darlene Flowers, Foster Parents Association of Washington State.

(Comments/Explanations) Tom Sykes, Legislative Auditor, Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee.

(Concerns) Jake Romo, Children's Administration.