

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5744

As Passed Senate, March 13, 1999

Title: An act relating to representation of parties in child dependency and termination proceedings.

Brief Description: Ordering a proposal to provide for representation of parties in child dependency and termination proceedings.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections (originally sponsored by Senators Haugen, Costa, Sheahan and Deccio).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services & Corrections: 2/18/99, 2/26/99 [DPS].
Passed Senate, 3/13/99, 43-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5744 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Hargrove, Chair; Costa, Vice Chair; Franklin, Kohl-Welles, Long, Patterson, Sheahan, Stevens, Zarelli.

Staff: Joan K. Mell (786-7447)

Background: Counties have been frustrated at the amount of money they have had to spend in defense costs when they do not control the volume of cases in child dependency and termination proceedings.

Summary of Bill: The public defense office must develop a proposal to address the costs and expenses of legal representation for indigent criminal defendants and indigent parents, guardians, legal custodians, and children in dependency and termination hearings under chapter 13.34 RCW. The proposal must address cost issues and strategies and be reported to the Legislature.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 9, 1999.

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

Testimony For: Guardian ad litem fees and other costs subsume substantial assets at the local level but the cost drivers are controlled at the state level.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Michael Shaw, Washington Association of Counties; Jim Crane, King County Office of Public Defense; Roger Neumaier, Snohomish County; Joanne Moore, OPD.

House Amendment(s): The requirement that the Office of Public Defense also address costs of legal representation for indigent criminal defendants and criminal trials is removed.