

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5853

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Human Services & Corrections, March 2, 1999

Title: An act relating to child care for children in homeless families.

Brief Description: Determining the need for child care for children in homeless families.

Sponsors: Senators Kohl-Welles, Long, Hargrove, Brown, Thibaudeau, Prentice, Winsley and Costa.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services & Corrections: 2/23/99, 3/2/99 [DPS-WM].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5853 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

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

Staff: Lynn Hale (786-7430)

Background: Concern exists that homeless families with young children are inadequately served in terms of access to child care and that such inadequacy impairs the family's ability to locate housing, employment and other basic family needs.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Legislature requires that the Department of Social and Health Services dedicate an effort to the development of a comprehensive, research-based, integrated plan to expand the availability and delivery of child care services to homeless families with children. The plans' goals must be to increase stability in the lives of families, offer safe and nurturing places for children, and provide economic opportunities for economic independence.

A homeless family means a family with children who have not yet reached their 14th birthday, which lacks a fixed and regular nighttime residence or a family whose nighttime residence is: a supervised shelter providing temporary accommodations; a halfway house or similar institution; a temporary accommodation in the residence of another person for not more than 90 days; or a place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for humans.

The Secretary of the Department of Social and Health Services must develop and present to the Legislature and Governor a plan for determining the need for child care services for children in homeless families and a method for providing child care services no later than June 1, 2000.

The plan must include at a minimum a determination of: the number of children who are in homeless families; the number of child care slots dedicated to children from homeless families; the number of child care slots that are necessary to provide state-supported child care for any homeless family who lacks the resources to obtain child care while they are homeless; and an assumed implementation date of July 1, 2001.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The definition of homeless family has been changed to include a family with children lacking a fixed and regular nighttime residence or a family whose nighttime residence is: a supervised shelter providing temporary accommodations; a halfway house or similar institution; a temporary accommodation in the residence of another person for not more than 90 days; or a place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for humans.

The definition of child has been changed to mean a child who has not yet reached his or her 14th birthday.

A provision has been added that the plan must include an assumed implementation date of July 1, 2001.

The provisions requiring the secretary to begin implementation of the plan not later than July 1, 2001 and stating that full implementation of the plan take place no later than June 30, 2002 have been removed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 15, 1999.

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

Testimony For: It is difficult for homeless families to overcome homelessness without adequate provisions for childcare. Childcare is needed so that parents can look for work or receive job training to enable them to meet the families needs and obtain housing.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Doreen Cato, Homeless Education Alliance; Gene Harris, First Place; Wendy Harris, King County Child Care Center; Dawn Larsen, Olympia Child Care Center.