

1 **ESSB 6709 - H AMD Adopted 3-8-02 0414**

2 By Representative Kagi

3 Strike everything after the enacting clause and insert:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) Within existing resources, the
5 department of social and health services, in cooperation with the
6 office of the superintendent of public instruction, shall convene a
7 working group to prepare a plan for the legislature which addresses
8 educational stability and continuity for school age children who enter
9 into short term foster care. The working group shall be comprised of
10 representatives from:

11 (a) The children's administration of the department of social and
12 health services;

13 (b) The special education, transportation, and apportionment
14 divisions of the office of the superintendent of public instruction;

15 (c) The Washington state institute for public policy;

16 (d) School districts;

17 (e) Organizations that regularly advocate for foster children;

18 (f) Foster parents; and

19 (g) Other individuals with related expertise as deemed appropriate
20 by the working group.

21 (2)(a) The working group shall develop a plan for assuring that
22 the best interests of the child are a primary consideration in the
23 school placement of a child in short-term foster care. The plan must:

24 (i) Determine the current status of school placement for children
25 placed in short-term foster care;

26 (ii) Identify options and possible funding sources from existing
27 resources which could be made available to assure that children placed
28 in short-term foster care are able to remain in the school where they
29 were enrolled prior to placement;

30 (iii) Submit recommendations to the legislature by November 1,
31 2002, to assure the best interest of the child receives primary
32 consideration in school placement decisions.

33 (b) The plan shall be developed within existing resources.

34 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The Nooksack Valley and Mount Vernon
35 school districts shall implement a pilot project within existing

1 resources to assist school age children in foster care fewer than
2 seventy-five days to continue attending the school where they were
3 enrolled before entering foster care. The pilot project shall be
4 implemented as provided in this section no later than April 30, 2002,
5 and shall conclude June 30, 2003. Data from the pilot project shall be
6 compiled and submitted to the working group established in section 1 of
7 this act no later than July 30, 2002, and periodically thereafter.

8 (2) For the purposes of the pilot project in the two school
9 districts, the department of social and health services and the school
10 districts shall, as appropriate, undertake the following activities:

11 (a) A school age child who enters foster care on or after April
12 30, 2002, shall, unless it is determined to be not in the best interest
13 of the child, continue attending the school where she or he was
14 enrolled before entering foster care, notwithstanding the physical
15 location of the child's principal abode. The best interest of the
16 child determination shall be made at the seventy-two hour shelter care
17 hearing, and reviewed at any subsequent shelter care hearing.

18 (b) The department of social and health services, the school the
19 child was attending prior to entering foster care, and the school that
20 serves the child's foster home shall negotiate a plan for transporting
21 the child to the school the child was attending prior to entering
22 foster care. The department of social and health services shall not be
23 responsible for the cost of transportation of the children in the pilot
24 project.

25 (c) If the department of social and health services places a child
26 in foster care, and the child does not continue to attend the school
27 the child was attending prior to entering foster care, the department
28 shall notify the school about the change.

29 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** This act is necessary for the immediate
30 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the
31 state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect
32 immediately.-

33 Correct the title.

EFFECT: Requires the DSHS to convene a workgroup to address the
issue of educational stability for foster children. Requires the
implementation of a pilot project within existing resources to
assist school age children in foster care fewer than seventy-five
days to continue attending the school where they were enrolled

before entering foster care. Clarifies that the DSHS will not be responsible for transportation costs. Adds an emergency clause.