

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1525

As Reported by House Committee On:
Children & Family Services

Title: An act relating to establishing a foster parent retention pilot program.

Brief Description: Establishing a foster parent retention pilot program.

Sponsors: Representatives Tokuda, Boldt, Kagi, Talcott, Morell, Miloscia, Darneille, Eickmeyer, Casada, Campbell, Ballasiotes, Dickerson, Conway, Keiser, Santos, Cody, Jackley, Edmonds, Lovick, Wood, Ruderman and McIntire.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Children & Family Services: 2/7/01, 2/22/01 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- The bill establishes a foster parent retention pilot program directed at foster parents caring for children who act out sexually.
- The pilot program is subject to independent evaluation.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Boldt, Republican Co-Chair; Tokuda, Democratic Co-Chair; Kagi, Democratic Vice Chair; Morell, Republican Vice Chair; Ballasiotes, Campbell, Darneille, Dickerson, Miloscia and Pflug.

Staff: Deborah Frazier (786-7152).

Background:

Children enter foster care for many reasons including abuse, neglect, abandonment, or serious physical illnesses. Many of these children have emotional and/or behavioral problems.

Foster homes provide 24-hour care to children who need temporary out-of-home placement. The homes are licensed for a three-year period by the Children's

Administration of the Department of Social and Health Services. Foster parents participate in two hours of orientation and 15 hours of pre-service training prior to licensing. Sixty hours of in-service training, over a two-year period, is required after licensing.

Payment rates and available services are intended to support foster parents' efforts to address the complex needs of the children in their care. Foster parents have expressed frustration in addressing the needs of children who have experienced sexual abuse. The Division of Children and Family Services reports that these children molest an average of five children while in foster care. Seventy percent of sexually abused children experience multiple foster home placements.

The 1999-01 biennial operating budget included funding for a foster parent retention pilot project for foster parents caring for children up to age twelve who act out sexually. The project expects to have served approximately 50 families by June 30, 2001.

Summary of Bill:

The bill establishes a foster parent retention pilot program directed at foster parents caring for children who act out sexually.

The Division of Children and Family Services will oversee a contractor who will provide the foster parents emergency assistance, on-going assistance in the home and group training.

The pilot program is subject to independent evaluation. The Division of Children and Family Services is charged with presenting the findings of the evaluation to the Legislature. The findings must include:

- the retention rate of foster parents in the program as compared to a comparable group of foster parents who are not in the program;
- incidents of sexual molestation of children by children;
- an estimate of the amount of money saved because of the foster parent retention pilot program; and
- recommendations as to whether a foster parent retention program should be continued.

The bill provisions expire January 1, 2004.

Appropriation: The sum of \$175,000 GF-S in FY 2002 and \$175,000 GF-S in FY 2003.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Foster families are getting intensive support in their own homes from this project now. This level of support keeps kids in their foster care settings, instead of being moved around. We have 24-hour, 7 day a week response to families, which they find to be the most helpful aspect to our services. With two more years of funding, we can prove the effectiveness of this approach.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: (In support) Representative Talcott; and Doug Swanberg, Metropolitan Development Council.

(Concerns) Marianna Conner, Washington Department of Social and Health Services.