

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5811

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Human Services & Corrections, February 7, 2002

Title: An act relating to annual reports of, and recommendations for improvements in, equal access to delivery of human services by the department of social and health services, juvenile rehabilitation administration.

Brief Description: Requiring the juvenile rehabilitation administration to prepare reports concerning equal access to its human services.

Sponsors: Senators Kohl-Welles, Hargrove, Costa, Long, McAuliffe and Carlson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services & Corrections: 2/15/01, 2/22/01 [DPS]; 2/7/02 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5811 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Hargrove, Chair; Costa, Vice Chair; Carlson, Franklin, Hewitt, Kastama, Kohl-Welles, Long and Stevens.

Staff: Edith Rice (786-7444)

Background: There is substantial national research that shows that social services are disproportionately delivered. This may be a special concern in the area of juvenile justice.

There is nothing to suggest that the research relating to disproportional service delivery would not apply equally to programs and children in Washington State. At present there is no requirement to determine whether girls and minorities have equal access to various human services provided by the Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Beginning June 30, 2002, the Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration (JRA) must report annually on the number of persons receiving services by gender and ethnicity. The report is made to the Legislature and Governor and must include the type of human service provided and whether it is provided by JRA or by contract.

If the data indicate that equal access to services is not available, JRA must provide an explanation for the lack of equal access and a plan and cost for attaining it. The submission of a plan does not create an entitlement for service. Basic education is considered a human service only when it is provided at a JRA facility.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute specifies that JRA must begin annual reporting on access to human services only upon implementation of an automated case management information system. The original bill required the first report by June 30, 2002.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Minorities are over-represented in the juvenile justice system, but under-served by social services both within and outside of the justice system. The arrest rate of girls has increased dramatically in the last few years. Girls face barriers to receiving equal access to services and programs targeted to their needs, since there are fewer girls in the system and the cost for running programs for a small number of persons is high. The JRA has been trying to address this issue, but reports are needed to determine future courses of action.

Testimony Against: The Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration is committed to equal access and agrees that no youth should be denied needed services. JRA currently has a very limited and old management information system, that would not be able to track the information this bill requires. At this time, special computer modules could be built to track this information, but JRA opposes this bill due to the fiscal impact. JRA has plans to build a full case management information system, but currently does not have funding to do so.

Testified: Senator Jeanne Kohl-Welles, sponsor (pro); Cheryl Stephani, Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration (con).