

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2361

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Children & Family Services & Corrections, February 26, 2004

Title: An act relating to visitation for children in foster care.

Brief Description: Requiring development of policies concerning visitation for children in foster care.

Sponsors: House Committee on Children & Family Services (originally sponsored by Representatives Kagi, O'Brien, Kenney, Wood, Dickerson, Schual-Berke, Boldt, Morrell and Darneille).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Children & Family Services & Corrections: 2/20/04, 2/26/04 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Stevens, Chair; Parlette, Vice Chair; Carlson, Deccio, Hargrove, McAuliffe and Regala.

Staff: Edith Rice (786-7444)

Background: The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) is required to develop methods for coordination of services to parents and children in child dependency cases. This requirement includes coordinating and integrating services to children and families, and using service plans and activities that address the children's and families' multiple needs, including ensuring that siblings have regular visits with each other, as appropriate.

Summary of Amended Bill: DSHS is required to develop consistent policies and protocols, based on current relevant research, concerning visitation for children in foster care to be implemented consistently throughout the state.

The policies and protocols must be consistent with the provisions of Chapter 13.34 RCW and implementation of the policies and protocols must be consistent with relevant orders of the court.

DSHS must report on the policies and protocols concerning visitation for children in foster care to the appropriate committees of the Legislature by January 1, 2005.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: Representatives of parents are added to the group to be consulted by the department in developing consistent policies and protocols around visitation.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Current visitation practices are inconsistent and inadequate. Statewide standards should be set. Someone representing parents should be included in the list of groups to be consulted by DSHS to develop policies.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Kevin Glacken-Coley, Children's Alliance (pro); Art Cantrall, Department of Social and Health Services (pro); Joanne Moore, Director, Office of Public Defense (pro); Laurie Lippold, Children's Home Society (pro).