

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 2553

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

Title: An act relating to the distribution of child support amongst multiple cases.

Brief Description: Revising the distribution of child support amongst multiple cases.

Sponsors: Representatives Pettigrew, Delvin and Dickerson; by request of Department of Social and Health Services.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Children & Family Services & Corrections: 2/18/04, 2/26/04 [DPA-WM].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

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

Staff: Lilah Amos (786-7429)

Background: The Department of Social and Health Services Division of Children's Services collects current and past-due child support and distributes those funds first to pay all current support due in proportion to the amount of current support owed to each family. If funds are also available to pay past-due support, the Division of Child Support is required to distribute that past-due support based on the proportionate size of each debt owed.

Summary of Amended Bill: The Division of Children's Services is authorized to adopt rules governing the distribution of past-due child support without requiring that the distribution be in proportion to the size of each arrearage debt. Washington must give priority to payment of past-due support to custodial parents, both in Washington and other states, so long as the other state's policy is to pay the custodial parent first.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: Custodial parents will receive past-due support before the debt to the state of Washington is paid so long as the policy of the state in which that custodial parent resides is to pay the funds first to the custodial parent.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: HB 2553 will result in significant revenue increase to the state and will allow the state to prioritize reimbursement to Washington for funds paid to support parents who

have received TANF or other assistance. Some other states have similar distribution policies. The proposed amendment will eliminate any revenue savings from the bill. The proposal of distribution in accordance with the policy of another state is unworkable, since it would be necessary to contact the other state monthly on each case to ensure that the custodial parent's status had not changed. The mandatory turnaround time on distribution of payments would be difficult to meet, which might result in loss of federal funding.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO (original bill): David Stillman, Department of Social and Health Services, Division of Child Support.