

SENATE BILL REPORT

HJM 4012

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Children & Family Services & Corrections, April 2, 2003

Brief Description: Encouraging counties and local governments to establish a Children's Advocacy Center.

Sponsors: Representatives Miloscia, Delvin, Dickerson, Boldt, Chase, Moeller, Edwards, Haigh, Pettigrew, Benson, Veloria, Kagi and Schual-Berke.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Children & Family Services & Corrections: 3/28/03, 4/2/03 [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: Tony Rugel (786-7754)

Background: Children's Advocacy Centers offer a comprehensive approach to services for abused children and their families. These programs are designed by professionals and volunteers responding to the needs of their communities. Children's Advocacy Centers stress coordination of investigation and intervention services by bringing together professionals and agencies as a multidisciplinary team to create a child-focused approach to child abuse cases, with the goal of ensuring that children are not revictimized by the very system designed to protect them.

The National Children's Alliance is a not-for-profit organization, founded in 1987, whose mission is to provide training, technical assistance, and networking opportunities to communities seeking to plan, establish, and improve Children's Advocacy Centers.

Summary of Amended Bill: The Senate and the House of Representatives find that the effect of child sexual abuse on victims is devastating and the subsequent investigation, prosecution, and advocacy involving child victims should be implemented in a manner so as to not further traumatize victims.

The Senate and the House of Representatives encourage counties, local governments and the Department of Social and Health Services to establish Children's Advocacy Centers, which are members of the National Children's Alliance, to improve outcomes for child victims of sexual abuse.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: The Department of Social and Health Services is added as a party who is encouraged to help establish Children's Advocacy Centers.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Children's Advocacy Centers have been helpful in providing resources and needed assistance in child abuse cases in the counties where they exist.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Nancy Foll, Washington State Assoc. of Children's Advocacy Centers; Deborah Hall, Monarch Child Justice and Advocacy Center; James Clarkson, Gray's Harbor Children's Advocacy Center; Seth Dawson, WA St. Assn. for Children's Advocacy Centers.