

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5823

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Children & Family Services & Corrections, February 28, 2003

Title: An act relating to improving services for kinship caregivers.

Brief Description: Improving services for kinship caregivers.

Sponsors: Senators McAuliffe, Stevens, Eide, Fairley, Regala, Hargrove, Kohl-Welles and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Children & Family Services & Corrections: 2/21/03, 2/28/03 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5823 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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

Staff: Tony Rugel (786-7754)

Background: A task force for kinship care was convened and met in the summer and fall of 2002. The task force reviewed various options and concerns regarding kinship care. One recommendation was for the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to expand efforts to locate kin for children in need of services. In addition, the task force concluded that special efforts should be taken to assist kin in their interaction with DSHS when providing services to children.

Summary of Substitute Bill: DSHS must develop and implement strategies to prioritize the placement of children with willing and able kin when out-of-home placement is required. The strategies must include procedures for searching for appropriate kin, reunification efforts, and permanency planning with appropriate kin.

When a child is placed with kin as part of a voluntary agreement, the parents are encouraged to disclose contact information for available and appropriate kin within two weeks of the voluntary agreement.

DSHS must also collaborate with nonprofit community based agencies in establishing two pilot programs using nonstate or private funds to assist kinship caregivers with navigating the system of services for children in out-of-home care.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: When a child is placed with kin as part of a voluntary agreement, the parents are encouraged to disclose contact information for available and appropriate kin within two weeks of the voluntary agreement.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Testimony was given stressing the importance of the work that kinship caregivers perform, and the value of having someone who can help navigate the maze of state social and health services.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Kevin A Campbell, Catholic Community Services of Western Washington; Darlene Flowers, Foster Parents Assoc. of WA State; Kristie Lund, Relative Caregiver; Rick Bartholomew, WA State Bar Assoc.; LaVerne Lamoureux, DSHS; Edith Owen, Pierce County Relatives Raising Children; Laurie Lippold, Children's Home Society; Ann and Tanis Harding, Kinship Care.