

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESB 5991

As Passed Senate, April 10, 2003

Title: An act relating to changing minimum requirements for the existing secure community transition facility.

Brief Description: Changing minimum requirements for the existing secure community transition facility.

Sponsors: Senators Stevens, Hargrove, Parlette, Regala, Carlson, McAuliffe and Winsley.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Children & Family Services & Corrections: 2/28/03 [DP].

Passed Senate: 4/10/03, 39-9.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

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

Staff: Fara Daun (786-7459)

Background: Under current law, the secure community transition facility (SCTF) on McNeil Island has a minimum staffing ratio of one staff member to each resident during normal waking hours and one staff member for every two residents during normal sleeping hours while the facility has six or fewer residents.

The legislation authorizing the construction and occupation of the SCTF on McNeil Island required a law enforcement officer to be on the island 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This requirement is currently being met by Washington State Patrol officers working overtime.

Changes to minimum staffing ratios for SCTFs or to the requirement for law enforcement around the clock for the SCTF on McNeil Island cannot be made except by the Legislature.

Summary of Bill: Minimum staffing ratios at the SCTF on McNeil Island are one staff member to three residents during normal waking hours and one staff member to four residents during normal sleeping hours subject to a minimum of two staff per housing unit.

The section requiring a law enforcement officer to be present on the island around the clock is repealed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 26, 2003.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on July 1, 2003.

Testimony For: These staffing levels are commensurate with the needs for this facility. Because of its location, it is possible to take advantage of the proximity of the new total confinement facility. The new total confinement facility will have security staff that will be available to the SCTF as needed. There have been no calls for the law enforcement officer during the period since 2001 in which there have been SCTF residents on McNeil Island. We now have some history with the SCTF that we did not have when the requirements were imposed. These changes will not endanger the public.

Testimony Against: Although we recognize the budgetary reality, the staffing ratios and law enforcement requirement were part of the arrangement by which Pierce County accepted the SCTF.

Testified: Senator Val Stevens, prime sponsor; Mark Seling, Special Commitment Center, DSHS (pro); Jean Wessman, Washington State Association of Counties (con).