

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6446

As of January 26, 2004

Title: An act relating to the duty of members of the clergy to report child abuse or neglect.

Brief Description: Clarifying the duty of members of the clergy to report abuse or neglect.

Sponsors: Senators Kohl-Welles, Benton, Hargrove, Shin, Rasmussen and Winsley.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Children & Family Services & Corrections: 1/28/04.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Staff: Fara Daun (786-7459)

Background: Current Washington law requires persons in certain professions to report cases of suspected child abuse or neglect to law enforcement or the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). The mandatory reporting law also applies to Department of Corrections personnel, with regard to offenders, and to adults who are capable of making a report, with regard to the children with whom they reside.

Summary of Bill: When a member of the clergy becomes aware of an allegation of child abuse or neglect against another member of the clergy over whom he or she has supervisory responsibility, the supervising clergy member must report the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or DSHS unless the allegation was obtained solely as a result of a confession covered by the clergy-penitent privilege. When a member of the clergy is acting in a capacity that would otherwise require him or her to report, the clergy member must report under those provisions.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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