

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## ESB 6692

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As Passed Senate, February 13, 2004

**Title:** An act relating to the definition of out-of-home placement.

**Brief Description:** Revising the definition of out-of-home placement.

**Sponsors:** Senators Stevens, Hargrove, McAuliffe, Parlette, Eide, Schmidt, Deccio, Kastama, Regala, Sheahan, Rasmussen and Shin.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Children & Family Services & Corrections: 2/3/04 [DP].

Passed Senate: 2/13/04, 48-0.

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### 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:** Edith Rice (786-7444)

**Background:** The Legislature has recognized that protecting the health and safety of children is paramount. When their safety is threatened by abuse or neglect, children can be placed in out-of-home (foster) care. If the issues these families are experiencing can be addressed prior to removing the child from the home, families can be strengthened and the high costs associated with foster care can be avoided. Intensive family preservation services provides intensive, in home crisis intervention, counseling, and life-skills education for families who have children at imminent risk of placement in out-of-home state funded care. The goal of family preservation services is to prevent the unnecessary out-of-home placement of children and to teach families new problem-solving skills to prevent future crises.

In some instances, reunification of a child with their family is not possible. The department will attempt to locate other family members with whom the child can be placed. Under current law, these kinship placements are defined as out-of-home placements.

Current law prohibits the department from providing intensive family preservation services unless it can be shown that they prevent out-of-home placement in at least 70 percent of the cases served for a period of no less than six months following termination of services. The department can renew the contract even if the contractor is not meeting this standard, if it determines that the contractor is making progress towards meeting that goal or there are other conditions which contributed to the failure to reach the standard.

**Summary of Bill:** Intensive family preservation services may be provided by the department as long as contractors show their services prevent foster care placement in 70 percent of the

cases in which a child is placed out of the home. Placement with kin is no longer considered a "failure" in providing services to the child and their family.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For:** Kinship care is much more common today than when the pilot for family preservation services was developed. Placement with other family members should not be considered a failure.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Charlotte Booth, Executive Director, Institute for Family Development; Laverne Lamoureux, Director Program and Policy, Children's Administration, DSHS.