

CERTIFICATION OF ENROLLMENT

SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5811

58th Legislature
2003 Regular Session

Passed by the Senate April 21, 2003
YEAS 43 NAYS 0

President of the Senate

Passed by the House April 11, 2003
YEAS 83 NAYS 0

Speaker of the House of Representatives

Approved

Governor of the State of Washington

CERTIFICATE

I, Milton H. Doumit, Jr.,
Secretary of the Senate of the
State of Washington, do hereby
certify that the attached is
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5811 as
passed by the Senate and the House
of Representatives on the dates
hereon set forth.

Secretary

FILED

**Secretary of State
State of Washington**

SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5811

AS AMENDED BY THE HOUSE

Passed Legislature - 2003 Regular Session

State of Washington 58th Legislature 2003 Regular Session

By Senate Committee on Children & Family Services & Corrections
(originally sponsored by Senators Hargrove, Stevens and McAuliffe)

READ FIRST TIME 02/24/03.

1 AN ACT Relating to the involvement of the birth family in foster
2 care; amending RCW 13.34.260; and creating a new section.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that a large group of
5 children spend a significant part of their lives in foster care. Each
6 individual connected to a child in an out-of-home placement must have
7 an abiding appreciation of the seriousness of the child's separation
8 from his or her family and the past, whether that separation is short,
9 long, or permanent in nature. It is the intent of the legislature to
10 recognize and honor the history and the family connections that each
11 child brings to an out-of-home placement.

12 The legislature finds that creating and sanctioning a connection
13 between a child's birth parents and foster family, when appropriate,
14 can result in better relationships among birth families, children,
15 foster families, and social workers. Creating and sanctioning this
16 connection can result in greater foster placement stability and fewer
17 disruptions for children, as well as greater satisfaction for foster
18 parents and social workers.

1 **Sec. 2.** RCW 13.34.260 and 2002 c 52 s 7 are each amended to read
2 as follows:

3 (1) In an attempt to minimize the inherent intrusion in the lives
4 of families involved in the foster care system and to maintain parental
5 authority where appropriate, the department, absent good cause, shall
6 follow the wishes of the natural parent regarding the placement of the
7 child. Preferences such as family constellation, sibling
8 relationships, ethnicity, and religion shall be considered when
9 matching children to foster homes. Parental authority is appropriate
10 in areas that are not connected with the abuse or neglect that resulted
11 in the dependency and shall be integrated through the foster care team.

12 (2) When a child is placed in out-of-home care foster parents are
13 encouraged to:

14 (a) Provide consultation to the foster care team based upon their
15 experience with the child placed in their care;

16 (b) Assist the birth parents by helping them understand their
17 child's needs and correlating appropriate parenting responses;

18 (c) Participate in educational activities, and enter into
19 community-building activities with birth families and other foster
20 families;

21 (d) Transport children to family time visits with birth families
22 and assist children and their families in maximizing the purposefulness
23 of family time.

24 (3) For purposes of this section, "foster care team" means the
25 foster parent currently providing care, the currently assigned social
26 worker, and the parent or parents; and "birth family" means the persons
27 described in RCW 74.15.020(2)(a).

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