
**Juvenile Justice & Family Law
Committee**

HB 2979

Brief Description: Addressing cultural upbringing in parenting plans.

Sponsors: Representatives Hasegawa, Chase, Roberts and Santos.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Adds that a parenting plan must allocate decision-making authority with respect to a child's cultural upbringing.

Hearing Date: 1/25/06

Staff: Kara Durbin (786-7133).

Background:

Under Washington law, divorcing couples with children must establish a parenting plan. The parenting plan establishes the rights and responsibilities of each parent. Each plan must include: (1) a dispute resolution process for handling disagreements between the parents; (2) an allocation of decision-making authority to one or both parents for each child's education, health care and religious training; and (3) a schedule of when each child is to reside with each parent.

A parenting plan must allocate decision-making authority to one or both parents in three areas: education, health care, and religious upbringing. Other areas of decision-making may also be included in the parenting plan. For example, some parenting plans contain a provision that there be joint decision-making for the child's extra-curricular activities that occur during both parties' parenting time, or activities that require a financial commitment from both parents.

Summary of Bill:

In allocating decision-making authority under a parenting plan, a court must allocate to one or both parents the authority to make decisions with respect to a child's cultural upbringing. Any allocation of decision-making authority regarding cultural upbringing must reflect the inherent value of sustaining the child's connection to his or her cultural heritage, through education or by other means.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.