

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SHB 1280

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Human Services & Corrections, March 31, 2005

**Title:** An act relating to the kinship care oversight committee.

**Brief Description:** Extending the kinship care oversight committee and its duties.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Children & Family Services (originally sponsored by Representatives Pettigrew, Hinkle, Kagi, Walsh, Schual-Berke, McDonald, Clibborn, Dickerson, P. Sullivan, Roach, Orcutt, Darneille, Morrell, Wallace and Santos).

**Brief History:** Passed House: 2/28/05, 89-0.

**Committee Activity:** Human Services & Corrections: 3/21/05, 3/31/05 [DPA].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Hargrove, Chair; Regala, Vice Chair; Stevens, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Carrell, McAuliffe and Thibaudeau.

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

**Background:** In 2001, the Legislature directed the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) to study the prevalence and needs of families who are raising related children. In June 2002, the WSIPP issued a report describing kinship care issues.

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) convened the Kinship Caregiver Workgroup in 2002 to develop a briefing for the Legislature identifying the policy issues related to kinship caregivers, the federal and state statutes associated with these issues, and options to address the issues.

The Kinship Care Workgroup presented recommendations to the Legislature in November 2002 including the recommendation that the Legislature mandate and fund an ongoing committee of relative caregivers and others to oversee the implementation of the recommendations in the report and continue future work on kinship care in the state.

In 2003, the Legislature passed HB 1233 which related to improving services for kinship caregivers. The bill created an oversight committee charged with the responsibility to monitor, guide, and report on kinship care recommendations and implementation activities. The committee was required to report to the Legislature by December 1, 2004 and was due to expire in January 2005.

**Summary of Amended Bill:** The DSHS is required to establish an oversight committee to report on kinship care recommendations and implementation activities. The responsibilities of the committee include the requirement that the committee provide consultation on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the 2002 kinship care report. The

oversight committee is required to draft a definition of kinship care with certain restrictions. The DSHS cannot use a different definition of kin unless authorized by the legislature.

A requirement is added that the DSHS consult with the Kinship Care Oversight Committee on its efforts to better collaborate and coordinate services to benefit kinship care families.

Membership of the oversight committee is described.

The Oversight Committee must annually update the legislature and Governor on its activities. The committee expires in January, 2010.

**Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill:** An annual update is required and the committee expires in five years.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

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

**Testimony For:** This bill describes an informal system that has been around for years - that of extended family members taking care of children who's parents are unable to do so. The oversight committee helps identify those issues that family members have in dealing with the children in their care. Many of these kinship caregivers have already raised their own children, many are grandparents.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Who Testified:** PRO: Representative Eric Pettigrew, prime sponsor.