

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5872

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Human Services & Corrections, February 24, 2005

Title: An act relating to creating a department of family and children's services.

Brief Description: Creating the department of family and children's services.

Sponsors: Senators Stevens, Carrell, Mulliken, Deccio, Finkbeiner, Delvin, Benson, Johnson, Oke, Hewitt and Schmidt.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services & Corrections: 2/17/05, 2/24/05 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5872 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Hargrove, Chair; Regala, Vice Chair; Brandland, Carrell and McAuliffe.

Staff: Edith Rice (786-7444)

Background: The Children's Administration (CA) and the Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration (JRA) are currently two separate administrations within a larger agency, the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). CA and JRA are each lead by an assistant secretary who reports to the Secretary of DSHS. CA provides and oversees services to families with children regarding their safety and placement. JRA operates the state's juvenile rehabilitation facilities and related functions.

DSHS provides services to other needy populations through the Aging and Disability Services Administration (providing residential, home, and community services for these populations), the Economic Services Administration (providing financial assistance through public assistance and employment programs, child support, and child care), the Health and Rehabilitative Services Administration (providing mental health, alcohol and substance abuse, deaf and hard of hearing, vocational rehabilitation, and civil commitment services) and the Medical Assistance Administration (providing medicaid, medicare, and related services).

DSHS was created in 1970 to combine the powers, duties, and functions vested in the existing departments of public assistance, institutions, veterans rehabilitation council, and vocational rehabilitation. Legislative intent at the time, expressed a desire for the department to concern itself with changing social needs. Over the years since its formation, the types of services DSHS has provided to the ever growing and diverse population of Washington have expanded. The legislature has seen fit at different times to create separate and distinct agencies which were once part of the larger DSHS. Some examples are the creation of the Department of Corrections in 1981 and the Department of Health in 1989.

Summary of Substitute Bill: A seven member task force is created to determine the structure for the new department of family and children's services. The Dean of the University of Washington School of Social Work must serve as chair of the task force and other members will be jointly chosen by the Chair of the Senate Human Services and Corrections Committee and the Chair of the House Children and Family Services Committee. The committee must report findings and recommendations to the legislature in two reports, due by March 1, 2006 and November 1, 2006.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Language creating a seven member task force to determine the structure for the new department of family and children's services replaces language that created the new department of family and children's services.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 14, 2005.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: Yes.

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

Testimony For: This could improve services to youth. Its time for a change. CPS should not be investigating suspected abuse at JRA facilities. Restructuring could accomplish the purposes we support as set out in statute in the Family Policy Council principles.

Testimony Against: None.

Other: We have concerns about the fiscal impact of this bill.

Who Testified: PRO: Jack Smith, Jerry Elliot, JRA and WFSE; Laurie Lippold, Children's Home Society; Kevin Glackin-Coley, Children's Alliance. OTHER: Laverne Lamoureux, Children's Administration and DSHS.