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HOUSE BILL 1426

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State of Washington

59th Legislature

2005 Regular Session

By Representatives Roberts, McDonald, Kagi, Nixon, Pettigrew, Dickerson, Darneille, Tom, Rodne, Hasegawa, O'Brien, Lovick, Ormsby, Morrell, Chase and Santos

Read first time 01/24/2005. Referred to Committee on Children & Family Services.

1 AN ACT Relating to children of incarcerated parents; and creating  
2 new sections.

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

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that children of  
5 incarcerated parents face significant obstacles in their lives. In  
6 many cases, these children have witnessed the arrest of a parent, face  
7 unstable living arrangements and multiple school placements, live under  
8 financial hardship, and experience the social stigma associated with  
9 their parents' incarceration. As a result of these factors, children  
10 of incarcerated parents are at risk for poor academic achievement,  
11 substance abuse, and delinquency and criminal activity that can lead to  
12 their own incarceration.

13 The legislature intends to support children in the state whose  
14 parents are incarcerated by encouraging the state agencies involved  
15 with families of individuals who are incarcerated to coordinate and  
16 expand existing services for these families in order to improve the  
17 well-being of children of incarcerated parents both over the short term  
18 and the long term.

1        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 2.** (1) The department of corrections, in  
2 partnership with the department of social and health services, shall  
3 establish an oversight committee to develop a comprehensive interagency  
4 plan to provide the necessary services and supports for the children of  
5 this state whose parents are incarcerated in jail or prison.

6        (2) The interagency plan shall include the following:

7        (a) Identification of existing state services and programs, as well  
8 as recognized community-based services and programs, for children whose  
9 parents are incarcerated;

10       (b) Identification of methods to improve collaboration and  
11 coordination of existing services and programs;

12       (c) Recommendations concerning new services and programs for  
13 children whose parents are incarcerated, involving both interagency and  
14 community-based efforts; and

15       (d) Identification of evidence-based practices and areas for  
16 further research to support the long-term provision of services and  
17 programs for children whose parents are incarcerated, including the  
18 following:

19       (i) Identification and ongoing collection of data relating to  
20 incarcerated individuals in the state who have children under eighteen  
21 years of age; and

22       (ii) Identification and sharing of information relating to children  
23 of incarcerated parents who are involved in the juvenile justice or  
24 child welfare systems, to the extent permissible under state and  
25 federal law.

26       (3) The oversight committee shall include the following:

27       (a) Representatives with decision-making authority of: The  
28 department of corrections, the children's administration of the  
29 department of social and health services, the juvenile rehabilitation  
30 administration of the department of social and health services, law  
31 enforcement and jails, the office of superintendent of public  
32 instruction, the courts, prosecuting attorneys and public defenders,  
33 and community-based agencies working with families of individuals who  
34 are incarcerated; and

35       (b) Caregivers of children whose parents are incarcerated.

36       (4) The oversight committee shall develop the interagency plan by

1 June 30, 2006, with an interim report due January 1, 2006.

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