

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1703

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Early Learning & Children's Services

**Title:** An act relating to creating a domestic violence pilot program to colocate a domestic violence advocate in department of social and health services offices.

**Brief Description:** Creating a domestic violence pilot program to colocate a domestic violence advocate in department of social and health services offices.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Schual-Berke, Walsh, Pettigrew, Haler, Simpson, Hinkle, Hurst, Hunter, Priest, Upthegrove, Roberts, Springer, Pedersen, Hudgins, Morrell, Cody, Dickerson, McIntire, P. Sullivan, Appleton, Roach, Kessler, Darneille, Hasegawa, Moeller, Williams, Conway, Santos, Kenney and Lantz.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Early Learning & Children's Services: 2/16/07, 2/27/07 [DPS].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Creates a domestic violence pilot program to co-locate a domestic violence advocate in Department of Social and Health Services offices.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & CHILDREN'S SERVICES

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Kagi, Chair; Haler, Ranking Minority Member; Walsh, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appleton, Hinkle, Pettigrew and Roberts.

**Staff:** Sonja Hallum (786-7092).

**Background:**

According to the Child Welfare League of America, studies show that child abuse occurs in 30 percent - 60 percent of domestic violence cases that involve families with children. Between 1.5 million and 3.3 million children witness some form of violence at home each year. In one nationwide survey of 6,000 families, researchers found that 50 percent of men who frequently

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assault their wives also frequently abuse their children. In a 1991 Boston City Hospital study, researchers reported that 59 percent of mothers of abused and neglected children had medical records that suggested that their partners had battered them.

In Washington, the Department of Social and Health Services (Department) does not currently have a domestic violence program within its offices serving children and families involved with the child welfare system.

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## **Summary of Substitute Bill:**

### Creation of the Pilot

The Department is required to create a pilot program to place a domestic violence advocate in a minimum of two Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) offices.

The purpose of the program is to provide domestic violence information and support to adult victims of domestic violence who are receiving services from the Department and to assist the DCFS workers to identify and respond effectively to domestic violence in their caseloads.

The sites will be selected by September 2007 through a request for proposal process. The proposal must require a community-based domestic violence agency to commit to working with the Department for the purpose of providing domestic violence services to clients involved with Child Protective Services or Child Welfare Services.

### Domestic Violence (DV) Advocate

The agency selected to work with the Department to provide services must co-locate a DV advocate in the Department office. The DV advocate is responsible for providing education and support to Department staff, providing advocacy services to families to assist in linking the families to community supports, and participating in the Department meetings and case reviews.

The role of the DV advocate is to provide general domestic violence information and not involvement on specific cases. The DV advocate may not provide any consultation on cases for which they have provided direct advocacy service and may not provide direct advocacy if they have provided case consultation on the family's case.

### Advisory Group

The Department is required to convene advisory groups at the program sites to provide advice on the implementation and progress of the pilot program.

### Program Evaluation

The Department must utilize the services of an evaluator from a university or other organization who has expertise in evaluating the DCFS and expertise in domestic violence and child maltreatment issues of children and families.

Beginning in October 2007, the evaluator is required to conduct a preprogram assessment. The evaluator must assess and compare the program sites to two additional DCFS offices selected as comparison sites. The comparison sites may not have a DV advocate co-located at the site.

The evaluator will assess the program to determine the outcomes of the program. The evaluator is then required to use the results of the evaluation to identify the effectiveness of the program and to provide recommendations to the Department for improving domestic violence responses in other DCFS offices.

The evaluator is required to report the findings of the program to the appropriate committees of the Legislature by December 1, 2010.

#### Duration of the Pilot Program

The pilot program begins in January 2008 and expires January 1, 2011.

#### **Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:**

The substitute bill requires the community-based domestic violence agency to have experience working with families involved with Child Protective Services or Child Welfare Services rather than clients receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

All requirements regarding the supervisor provided by the Department, including training and supervisory duties over the DV advocate, are removed from the substitute bill.

The substitute bill clarifies the role of the DV advocate to be the provision of general domestic violence information and not involvement on specific cases. The DV advocate may not provide any consultation on cases for which they have provided direct advocacy service and may not provide direct advocacy if they have provided case consultation on the family's case.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 26, 2007.

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

#### **Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support of original bill) The intent of this bill is to improve outcomes and keep families intact. The pilot brings domestic violence and Department workers together to assist the Department workers to better understand DV issues. There needs to be a strong evaluation component to be sure the pilot was effective. The staff from the Department want more information to deal with their cases involving DV. National and local research shows a link between domestic violence in the home and child abuse and neglect. This pilot is based on positive experiences in other states. The supervisor plays an important role. Often when a survivor is involved in Child Protective Services, she is less effective at providing and

planning for the child. The DV advocate can help train and guide staff in how to handle these types of cases. The evaluation will give evidence of effectiveness and recommendations for expanding the program.

(With concerns on original bill) This is not in the Governor's budget and does have a fiscal impact so we cannot support it. We are concerned about the possible conflict with the DV advocate.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support of original bill) Representative Schual-Berke, prime sponsor; Yoshe Revelle, Global Citizens; Deborah Greenleaf, Public Health, King County; Grace Huong, Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence; Sandi Schram, Alicia Wells, and Kay Tomlinson, Domestic Abuse Women's Network; Susan Adams, Crystal Judson Family Justice Center; Margaret McKenna, Northwest Institute for Children and Families; Stella Farias, Washington Families United; and Joan Sharp, Washington Council for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect.

(With concerns on original bill) Cheryl Stephani, Department of Social and Health Services, Children's Administration.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.