

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5754

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Human Services & Corrections, February 16, 2007

Title: An act relating to creating the family, children, and youth administration within the department of social and health services.

Brief Description: Creating the family, children, and youth administration in the department of social and health services.

Sponsors: Senator Stevens.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services & Corrections: 2/13/07, 2/16/07 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5754 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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

Staff: Kiki Keizer (786-7430)

Background: The Children's Administration is the division of the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) that is responsible for child protective services and child welfare matters in our state.

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED SUBSTITUTE AS PASSED COMMITTEE (Human Services & Corrections): The Children in Families Administration is established as an administration within the DSHS and its mission and focus is defined.

The legislative intent section expresses the need for a more efficient and effective agency that is set up to cooperate with communities to deliver services, to prevent child abuse and neglect, and to intervene early in high-risk situations. The intent section also highlights the need for a clear mission and for accountability for providing needed services.

If social workers' workload in a particular field office reaches a level in which the focus shifts away from the priority work of conducting social work in the field, then the Children in Families Administration may hire staff to fulfill such functions as providing in-office support,

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assisting with court discovery requests and public disclosure requests, and providing in-home services to teach basic skills to parents.

The title is amended.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: While it may not be the time and place for creating a separate department in state government devoted to children's issues, efforts to address the issues discussed in the Task for on the Administration and Delivery of Services to Children and Families are appreciated. It is particularly important to focus on delivering the types of services to children and families that keep children safe and prevent them from being removed from their homes. The policies in the bill are consistent with the Family Policy Council principles that have been in statute since the early 1990s. These principles focus on collaborative, family-oriented, community-based, outcome-based services that emphasize creativity and customer service.

OTHER: The Children's Administration has a lot of work to do and is committed to doing it. The Governor has directed the Children's Administration to get the basics done right. The primary responsibility of the Children's Administration is the safety and well-being of children. Expanding the role of the agency into prevention should be tied to additional funding.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Laurie Lippold, Children's Home Society of Washington.

OTHER: Cheryl Stephani, DSHS, Children's Administration.