

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5807

---

---

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

**Title:** An act relating to child protective services pilot programs.

**Brief Description:** Establishing CPS training pilot programs.

**Sponsors:** Senators Stevens and Hargrove.

**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. 5807 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:** Social workers assigned to Child Protective Services (CPS) are often the first responders to reports of child abuse or neglect. CPS specialists must be prepared to make decisions that could have significant consequences for children and families. These important decisions are based upon their ability to gather and skillfully analyze information under emotional, and potentially volatile, circumstances.

One of the recommendations of the Joint Task Force on Child Safety for Children in Child Protective Services or Child Welfare Services Custody, established by the Legislature in 2005, was to encourage social workers and law enforcement officers to cross-train to gain perspective on the roles and responsibilities of the various agencies involved in investigations of child abuse and neglect. The recommendation indicated that investigative best practices could be included in that cross-training.

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

**Summary of Proposed Substitute (Human Services & Corrections):** The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) must establish a CPS pilot program in two field offices of the Children's Administration, which includes ten days of intensive training and field work, designed to build skills in such areas as critical thinking, interviewing witnesses, analyzing and preserving evidence, and writing investigation reports. The training includes course work

---

*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

in staff safety, including basic self-defense and de-escalation of threatening behavior. Training from medical experts or child psychologists is also included, in such areas as recognizing physical abuse injuries to children and assessing whether children present symptoms of self-mutilation or self-harm.

The pilot program includes incentives to participate in the program.

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee must evaluate the pilot program to determine whether the intensive training produces more efficient and effective investigations.

**EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY RECOMMENDED SUBSTITUTE AS PASSED COMMITTEE (Human Services & Corrections):** The provision for a \$5/hour financial incentive for participants in the pilot program is changed to a financial incentive from the DSHS in recognition of the additional work undertaken as part of the pilot program.

The emergency clause is eliminated.

**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: A lot of hard work has gone into the bill. We want to be sure to honor the hard work and additional work that the bill would require of CPS workers. It is important to make the additional training worthwhile and to give CPS workers an incentive for their full participation.

OTHER: Children's Administration was interested in going in this direction with investigative training, but there are fiscal implications with the increase in the hourly rate for CPS workers who participate in the program. The timing and emergency clause might also need adjustment to ensure that Children's Administration has enough time to design and implement the program.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Stevens, prime sponsor.

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