

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6618

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As of February 1, 2010

**Title:** An act relating to creating the family friendly court grant program.

**Brief Description:** Creating the family friendly court grant program.

**Sponsors:** Senators Regala and Kohl-Welles.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Judiciary: 2/02/10.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

**Staff:** Lidia Mori (786-7755)

**Background:** The National Center for State Courts reports that currently 17 states and the District of Columbia provide some sort of court-based child care services. California and New York have developed a statewide system of court-based child care centers. Colorado, Pennsylvania, and California are a few of the states that have adopted legislation that supports the development and funding of court-based childcare centers.

In Washington State, there are three court-based locations that provide child care for children of parents or guardians who are at the court facility on official court business. The Children's Waiting Room, on the campus of the Spokane County Courthouses, opened in 1997, as did the Jon and Bobbe Bridge Courthouse Drop-In Child Care Center, located in the Maleng Regional Justice Center in Kent. The Seattle Justice Center provides a children's waiting room for children of defendants and witnesses, and the future plan is to provide child care for parents and guardians who are doing business at the King County Superior and District Courts.

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

**Summary of Bill (Proposed Substitute):** It is the purpose of the family-friendly court child care program to improve access to the judicial system and expand the number of people who can serve as jurors and witnesses by making child care available for children of people who are required to be in attendance at court proceedings to which they are or will likely become a party, witness, or juror.

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*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.*

The Administrator for the Courts (AOC) is directed to develop and administer the family-friendly court grant program, and in doing so, collect data and define outcome measures. Some outcome measures to be included are whether delivery of child care has resulted in increased availability of witnesses, a more diverse juror pool, a more efficient entry of orders and petitions filed, and fewer dismissals of petitions based on default orders.

A court may apply to the AOC for grants from the family-friendly court grant program. To be eligible for a grant, a court must agree to be responsible for: (1) recruiting and hiring the child care providers, and ensuring that licensing requirements are met; (2) conducting criminal history checks; (3) selecting a safe physical location for the child care; (4) providing child care to children of people who are required to be at a court proceeding to which they are or will likely become a party, witness, or juror; (5) providing child care to children under the age of 12 years; (6) establishing income-based access to child care so those with the greatest financial need receive priority; (7) implementing a method of evaluating the effectiveness of the program and reporting the results of the evaluation annually to the Governor, the Legislature, and the AOC; and (8) providing an accounting of fiscal contributions received and expenditures made in connection with the program.

Grants from the family-friendly court grant program are for up to two years, and may be renewed once. Prior to receiving any program funds, the court is required to submit a spending plan to AOC. At the end of the fiscal year, the court must submit a financial report to AOC comparing the spending plan to actual expenditures. In addition to any grant received from AOC, courts implementing family-friendly court grant programs are directed to seek funds, grants, or donations from any private or public source.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

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