

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2828

As Reported by House Committee On: Ways & Means

Title: An act relating to removing the requirement that the department of social and health services or the department of early learning take appropriate action to establish or enforce support obligations whenever it receives an application for subsidized child care services or working connections child care services.

Brief Description: Removing the requirement that the department of social and health services or the department of early learning take appropriate action to establish or enforce support obligations whenever it receives an application for subsidized child care services or working connections child care services.

Sponsors: Representative Hunter.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Ways & Means: 4/4/12 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Removes the requirement that the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) or the Department of Early Learning take action to establish or enforce child support obligations when it receives an application for subsidized child care.
- Removes language specifying that a child care subsidy payment constitutes an authorization for the DSHS to provide support enforcement services.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 25 members: Representatives Hunter, Chair; Darneille, Vice Chair; Hasegawa, Vice Chair; Alexander, Ranking Minority Member; Bailey, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Dammeier, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Orcutt, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Carlyle, Chandler, Cody, Dickerson, Haler, Hudgins, Hunt, Kagi, Kenney, Ormsby, Parker, Pettigrew, Ross, Schmick, Seaquist, Springer, Sullivan and Wilcox.

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.

Staff: Melissa Palmer (786-7388).

Background:

Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) is a program for children from low-income households that provides subsidized child care while parents are at work or engaged in WorkFirst participation requirements. The Department of Early Learning (DEL) sets WCCC policy and the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) provides WCCC eligibility determinations.

In 2011 the Legislature passed Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5921, requiring WCCC applicants and recipients to seek child support enforcement services from the DSHS Division of Child Support as a condition of receiving subsidized child care. However, if the DSHS finds an applicant has good cause to not cooperate, then he or she is exempt from the child support requirement. The legislation also requires the DSHS or the DEL to take action to establish or enforce child support when it receives an application for subsidized child care. A child care subsidy payment constitutes an authorization for the DSHS to provide support enforcement services.

During the 2012 legislative session, the Legislature passed Substitute Senate Bill 6386 removing the requirement that an applicant or recipient must seek child support enforcement services from the DSHS as a condition of receiving child care subsidies.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The requirement that the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) or the Department of Early Learning take action to establish or enforce support obligations whenever it receives an application for subsidized child care services or Working Connections Child Care services is removed. The language specifying that a payment for subsidized child care constitutes an authorization for the DSHS to provide child support enforcement services is removed.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill removes the language specifying that payment for subsidized child care services constitutes an authorization for the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to provide child support enforcement services and that the DSHS is authorized to collect but not retain the child support payments.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on June 7, 2012.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) While this bill is simply cleaning up the statute, there is a desire to express gratitude to the Legislature for recognizing that the child support enforcement provisions were problematic. Although some fraud may have been prevented, the policy resulted in multiple unintended consequences. Implementation was cumbersome. There is an interest in partnering to develop legislation that does not run afoul of federal law or tribal agreements leading to more accountability and fraud prevention. Legislation could be developed with more time in the future.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Katie Nelson, Washington Federation of State Employees.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.