

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5573

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Human Services & Corrections, February 17, 2011

Title: An act relating to shared parenting and out-of-home placement program.

Brief Description: Regarding shared parenting placement agreements for children with disabilities placed in out-of-home care.

Sponsors: Senators Pridemore, Kline, Delvin and Shin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services & Corrections: 2/11/11, 2/17/11 [DP-WM].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

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

Staff: Kevin Black (786-7747)

Background: The Voluntary Placement Program (VPP) is a program that allows the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to place a child with a developmental disability outside the home pursuant to a written agreement which allows the parent or guardian to retain legal custody while the department is responsible for placement and care. Funding to the VPP has been limited in the previous decade and very few families currently have the opportunity to use this program.

Summary of Bill: A Shared Parenting Placement Agreement Program is created similar to the VPP, for use when the parent or guardian of a child with a developmental disability is unable to provide necessary care for the child and the parent or guardian has determined that the child would benefit from placement outside the home. DSHS must provide out-of-home residential services required for the child's health and safety, in the least restrictive environment available. A reassessment must occur at six months.

If the child would otherwise be placed at a Residential Habilitation Center (RHC), DSHS must transfer funding from the institutional budget to the community budget to cover costs for the child. The average rate for community services must not exceed 80 percent of the

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average daily rate for placement in the RHC. DSHS must license and certify new facilities or programs needed to serve children under this program within 30 days.

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: Even though the VPP was capped, families still go into crisis. Currently policy forces many of them to be served through an RHC, which is the most expensive venue for providing services. We want to place kids in their home community, in the same school district, and close to their families. Shared parenting will hold families together, and preserve the hope for future reunification. It is only under the most dire circumstances that a family seeks out of home placement for their children.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Ed Holen, Developmental Disabilities Council; Donna Obermeyer, parent; Diana Stadden, The Arc of Washington State; Darla Helt, The Arc of Clark County.