

HB 2657-S - DIGEST

(DIGEST AS ENACTED)

Prohibits the secretary of the department of social and health services from setting the amount of certain adoption assistance payments to more than eighty percent of the foster care maintenance payment for that child had he or she remained in a foster family home during the same period.

Requires the department of social and health services to:
(1) Establish a central unit of adoption support negotiators to help ensure consistent negotiation of adoption support agreements; and

(2) Request, in writing, that adoptive families with existing adoption support contracts renegotiate their contracts to establish lower adoption assistance payments if it is fiscally feasible for the family to do so.

VETO MESSAGE ON SHB 2657

March 29, 2012

To the Honorable Speaker and Members,
The House of Representatives of the State of Washington

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am returning herewith, without my approval as to Section 3, Substitute House Bill 2657 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to adoption support expenditures."

Section 3 requires the Department of Social and Health Services to convene a work group, as part of its children's mental health redesign efforts, to develop recommendations to better address the mental health service needs of adoptive families and reduce the need to spend adoption support payments on mental health services. The Department of Social and Health Services is additionally required to issue recommendations to the Legislature by December 15, 2012.

While I appreciate the intent of this section, the Department of Social and Health Services has already included the convening of a similar work group in its plan for improvements to the children's mental health system. I am directing the Secretary of the Department of Social and Health Services to consider the Legislature's intent in the composition and tasks of the work group and to keep the Legislature informed of its efforts. Creation of a work group in statute and the preparation of a formal report are not necessary.

For this reason, I have vetoed Section 3 of Substitute House Bill 2657.

With the exception of Section 3, Substitute House Bill 2657 is approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Christine Gregoire
Governor