
Early Learning & Human Services Committee

HB 2665

Brief Description: Concerning the expiration of the advisory committee on the disproportionate representation of children of color in Washington's child welfare system.

Sponsors: Representatives Pettigrew, Kagi, Sawyer, Gregerson, Freeman and Ortiz-Self; by request of Department of Social and Health Services.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs the Washington State Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee to develop membership rules by August 1, 2014.
- Specifies that membership rules are to be included in the annual secretary's report.
- Removes all expiration dates for the work of the Washington State Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee.

Hearing Date: 2/3/14

Staff: Lindsay Lanham (786-7120).

Background:

In 2007 the Legislature enacted Substitute House Bill 1472, which required the secretary of the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to convene an advisory committee to analyze and make recommendations regarding disproportionate representation of children of color in the state's child welfare system. If the results of the analysis indicated disproportionality or disparity for any racial or ethnic group in state, the advisory committee was charged with the development of a remediation plan and annual progress report for reducing and eliminating racial disproportionality and disparity in the state's child welfare system.

The membership of the advisory committee includes experts in social work, law, child welfare, psychology, and related fields; two or more tribal representatives; one representative of a

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community-based organization involved with child welfare; one representative from the DSHS; one current or former foster youth; one current or former foster parent; one parent previously involved with Washington's child welfare or juvenile justice system; and a representative from the Governor's Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee.

In 2008, the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) conducted an analysis that suggested that in 2004 Native American, African American, and Latina children were overrepresented in the state's child welfare. The analysis further concluded that the time of referral to the agency was the most disproportionate point in service.

As a result of the findings from the WSIPP study, the Washington State Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee developed a plan with specific remediation initiatives to safely reduce racial disproportionality. Some examples of activities recommended by the advisory committee included the implementation of cultural competency and anti-racism training, kinship care policies, and the implementation of a racial equity impact analysis tool.

The legislative mandate for the Washington State Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee originally expired on June 30, 2013 and was later extended to June 30, 2014.

Summary of Bill:

House Bill 2665 directs the advisory committee to develop membership rules by August 1, 2014 and include the membership rules in the annual secretary's report. House Bill 2665 removes all expiration dates for the work of the Washington State Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.