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**SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 2591**

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**State of Washington 64th Legislature 2016 Regular Session**

**By** House Early Learning & Human Services (originally sponsored by Representatives Hargrove, Kagi, Walsh, Dent, Caldier, Senn, Frame, Muri, Zeiger, McBride, Ormsby, and Gregerson)

AN ACT Relating to notifying foster parents of dependency hearings and their opportunity to be heard in those hearings; and amending RCW 13.34.096 and 13.34.820.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

**Sec.**  RCW 13.34.096 and 2009 c 520 s 25 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The department or supervising agency shall provide the child's foster parents, preadoptive parents, or other caregivers with timely and adequate notice of their right to be heard prior to each proceeding held with respect to the child in juvenile court under this chapter. For purposes of this section, "timely and adequate notice" means notice at the time the department would be required to give notice to parties to the case and by any means reasonably certain of notifying the foster parents, preadoptive parents, or other caregivers, including but not limited to written, telephone, or in person oral notification. For emergency hearings, the department shall give notice to foster parents, preadoptive parents, or other caregivers as soon as is practicable. For six-month review and annual permanency hearings, the department shall give notice to foster parents upon placement or as soon as practicable.

(2) The court shall establish and include in the court record after every hearing for which the department or supervising agency is required to provide notice to the child's foster parents, preadoptive parents, and caregivers whether the department provided adequate and timely notice, whether a caregiver's report was received by the court, and whether the court provided the child's foster parents, preadoptive parents, or caregivers with an opportunity to be heard in court. For purposes of this section, "caregiver's report" means a form provided by the department of social and health services to a child's foster parents, preadoptive parents, or caregivers that provides an opportunity for those individuals to share information about the child with the court before a court hearing. A caregiver's report shall not include information related to a child's biological parents.

(3) Absent exigent circumstances, the department shall provide the child's foster family home notice of expected placement changes as required by RCW 74.13.300.

(4) The rights to notice and to be heard apply only to persons with whom a child has been placed by the department ((~~before shelter care~~)) or supervising agency and who are providing care to the child at the time of the proceeding. This section shall not be construed to grant party status to any person solely on the basis of such notice and right to be heard.

**Sec.**  RCW 13.34.820 and 2007 c 410 s 6 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The administrative office of the courts, in consultation with the attorney general's office and the department of social and health services, shall compile an annual report, providing information about cases that fail to meet statutory guidelines to achieve permanency for dependent children.

(2) The administrative office of the courts shall submit the annual report required by this section to appropriate committees of the legislature by December 1st of each year, beginning on December 1, 2007. The administrative office of the courts shall also submit the annual report to a representative of the foster parent association of Washington state.

(3) The annual report shall include information regarding whether foster parents received timely notification of dependency hearings as required by RCW 13.34.096 and 13.34.145 and whether caregivers submitted reports to the court.

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