

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 2394

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Human Services, Mental Health & Housing, February 25, 2016

Title: An act relating to creating the parent to parent program for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Brief Description: Creating the parent to parent program for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Sponsors: Representatives Walsh, Senn, Kagi, Moscoso, Kilduff, Kochmar, Dent, Holy, Sawyer, Jinkins, Tharinger, Magendanz, Fey, Tarleton, Zeiger, Sells, McBride, Bergquist, Pollet, Santos, S. Hunt and Goodman.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/12/16, 93-3.

Committee Activity: Human Services, Mental Health & Housing: 2/25/16 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES, MENTAL HEALTH & HOUSING

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators O'Ban, Chair; Miloscia, Vice Chair; Darneille, Ranking Minority Member; Hargrove and Padden.

Staff: Alison Mendiola (786-7444)

Background: The Parent to Parent Program. The Parent to Parent Program connects parents of children with certain disabilities and special needs with other volunteer parents who also have children with similar disabilities or special needs. The volunteer parents provide peer and emotional support. The program also offers educational trainings and workshops for parents.

There are Parent to Parent programs in 31 counties including Adams, Asotin, Benton, Chelan, Clallam, Clark, Columbia, Cowlitz, Douglas, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Grays Harbor, Island, Jefferson, King, Kitsap, Kittitas, Lewis, Lincoln, Mason, Pacific, Pierce, Skagit, Snohomish, Spokane, Thurston, Walla Walla, Whatcom, Whitman, and Yakima.

Parent to Parent USA is a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to promote access and quality in parent to parent support for all families who have children or adolescents with

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a special health need, mental health issue, or disability. In Washington, many of the Parent to Parent programs are hosted by The Arc of Washington State.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Amendments): Goals for the Parent to Parent Program for individuals are established and include:

- providing early outreach, support and education to parents of children with special needs;
- matching a trained volunteer support parent with a new parent who has a child with similar needs; and
- providing parents with tools and resources to be successful.

Activities of the Parent to Parent Program may include:

- outreach and support to newly identified parents of children with special needs;
- educational trainings for parents to support their children;
- ongoing peer support from a trained volunteer support parent; and
- regular communication with other local programs.

"Special health care needs" means disabilities, chronic illnesses or conditions, health related educational or behavioral problems, or the risk of developing such disabilities, conditions, illnesses, or problems.

If funds are provided, the Parent to Parent Program will be funded through the Developmental Disability Administration and administered by a Washington State lead organization that has extensive experience supporting and training support parents for individuals with developmental disabilities. Each local program must be administered by a host organization through a contract with the lead organization. The lead organization must provide ongoing training to the host organizations and statewide program oversight.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY HUMAN SERVICES, MENTAL HEALTH & HOUSING COMMITTEE (Recommended Amendments): The term "special health care needs" is added and defined. The Parent to Parent Program helps those with developmental disabilities and/or special health care needs.

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: No public hearing was held.

Persons Testifying: N/A.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: N/A.