

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5831

As of January 9, 2018

Title: An act relating to assessing the needs of girls and young women concurrently involved in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems.

Brief Description: Concerning assessment of the needs of girls and young women concurrently involved in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems.

Sponsors: Senators Darneille, Keiser, Kuderer and Hunt.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services & Corrections: 1/08/18.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) to conduct a statewide study and review available data on the dually-involved female population.
- Requires the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) and the Washington State Supreme Court Gender and Justice Commission (Commission) to convene a work group to develop an implementation plan for best practices and system improvements regarding dually-involved females.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Staff: Brandon Popovac (786-7465)

Background: In 2014 and 2015, the Washington State Center for Court Research published a report that revealed several key findings about multi-system youth or youth involved with both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. It found that almost half of all youth referred to the juvenile justice system in 2010 had a history of involvement with the child welfare system. It also found that females and minority youth with a history of child welfare system contact have a higher likelihood of multi-system involvement. Additionally, multi-system youth are referred to the juvenile justice system at an earlier age than youth with no history of child welfare system involvement.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Advocacy organizations exist at the national level that have taken action to call attention to the needs of marginalized girls, including providing data and making policy recommendations. For example, Girls @ the Margin National Alliance, a collective of 200 local, state, and national organizations, has addressed complex issues confronting girls and young women at the margin who have experienced family and community violence, sexual abuse, racism, poverty, childhood adversity, and other serious challenges.

WSIPP is an entity created in 1983 that conducts non-partisan research at the direction of the Legislature or WSIPP's board of directors. WSIPP produces reports on a variety of topics of interest to the state and estimates benefit-cost analyses for a variety of state programs.

DCYF was created in 2017 to provide state services to children. On July 1, 2018, child welfare functions of the Department of Social and Health Services will be assumed by DCYF. On July 1, 2019, juvenile justice functions of the Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration will be assumed by DCYF.

The Commission was established by the Supreme Court in 1994, and is renewed by the court every five years. The Commission's key functions, including education coordination, grant management, and program and project development and oversight, allow it to promote gender equality in the system of law and justice.

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

Summary of Bill (Proposed Substitute): WSIPP must conduct a review of available state data on the dually-involved female population in Washington. The review must also include a survey of other states' systems. Dually-involved female is defined as any female person under 18 years of age who has concurrent involvement, whether diversionary, formal, or a combination of the two, with both the child welfare and the juvenile justice systems in Washington.

DCYF and the Commission must convene a work group to develop, in consultation with WSIPP, an implementation plan for best practices and system improvements regarding dually-involved females. The work group must also evaluate the limitations of current systems to serve the dually-involved female population and identify opportunities for cross-system collaboration on alternatives to current case administration processes. WSIPP must submit its study findings to the Legislature and the work group by July 1, 2019. The work group must submit a report on its plan and other effective and best practices to the Legislature by December 1, 2019.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 4, 2018.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill represents a critical step in designing effective policies for addressing harms to girls in both systems and creating better proactive strategies for education and vocational success. National studies show that these girls experience unique risks, such as sexual victimization and exploitation. Girls of color and those living in poverty suffer risks disproportionately and are more likely to become involved with both systems. Current systems are not adequate for meeting behavioral health and economic needs. A good program for boys is not necessarily good for girls, and vice versa. It is important to develop a plan specifically tailored to the experiences of girls in the state. Girls in the juvenile justice system are the most vulnerable population of the state's entire population and experience the most direct victimization and the poorest economic outcomes. Such girls end up on the economic margins of society and have higher mortality rates. Boys in both systems have only a 19 percent chance of graduating from high school while females in both systems have only an 11 percent chance.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Jeannie Darneille, Prime Sponsor; Sarah Walker, The Justice for Girls Coalition of Washington

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.