

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## 2SSB 5144

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**As Passed House:**  
March 4, 2020

**Title:** An act relating to implementing child support pass-through payments.

**Brief Description:** Implementing child support pass-through payments.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Human Services, Reentry & Rehabilitation (originally sponsored by Senators Dhingra, O'Ban, Wilson, C., Keiser, Darneille and Frockt).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Civil Rights & Judiciary: 2/25/20, 2/26/20 [DP];

Appropriations: 2/29/20 [DP].

**Floor Activity:**

Passed House: 3/4/20, 96-0.

**Brief Summary of Second Substitute Bill**

- Requires the Department of Social and Health Services to pass through a portion of child support collections for families receiving assistance under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CIVIL RIGHTS & JUDICIARY

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Kilduff, Chair; Thai, Vice Chair; Dufault, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Goodman, Graham, Hansen, Kirby, Klippert, Peterson, Valdez, Walen and Ybarra.

**Staff:** Edie Adams (786-7180).

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 29 members: Representatives Ormsby, Chair; Robinson, 1st Vice Chair; Bergquist, 2nd Vice Chair; Stokesbary, Ranking Minority Member; Rude, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Caldier, Chopp, Cody, Corry, Dolan, Dye,

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*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.*

Fitzgibbon, Hansen, Hoff, Hudgins, Kilduff, Macri, Mosbrucker, Pettigrew, Ryu, Schmick, Senn, Springer, Steele, Sullivan, Sutherland, Tarleton, Tharinger and Ybarra.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Chandler and Kraft.

**Staff:** Linda Merelle (786-7092).

**Background:**

Federal law requires states to have a child support enforcement program that complies with federal requirements as a condition of receiving federal funds for child support enforcement and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) programs. As a condition of receiving TANF cash benefits, a family must assign its rights to child support to the state during the months the family receives the benefits. Assigned child support collections are retained by states and the federal government as partial reimbursement for TANF assistance.

The federal Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 allows states to pass through up to \$100 per month of collected child support to TANF families with one child and up to \$200 per month of collected child support to TANF families with two or more children without having to reimburse the federal government for its share of the child support collected. This is known as the child support pass through. States that opt to implement the child support pass through must disregard the child support collection paid to the family in determining the family's cash TANF benefit.

Washington implemented child support pass-through payments in October 2008, but suspended the child support pass-through payments effective May 1, 2011.

**Summary of Bill:**

Effective February 1, 2021, the Department of Social and Health Services is required to pass through to families receiving assistance under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program up to \$50 per month in collected child support for a family with one child and up to \$100 per month in child support for a family with two or more children. The pass-through payments must be implemented in accordance with the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Civil Rights & Judiciary):**

(In support) Washington implemented child support pass-through payments between 2008 and 2011. During that time there was an increase in monthly child support payments and the average amount of child support that was collected. Allowing pass-through payments provides critical resources to families struggling to provide for their children. There is a

positive impact on the family relationship because when the noncustodial parent knows that their payments are going to the child, the connection between the child and parent is strengthened. This bill will bring Washington in line with the 25 other states that allow for some level of child support pass through. This is a pared down version of the prior bill in recognition of the fiscal impact to the state. The bill received unanimous support in the Senate.

(Opposed) None.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Appropriations):**

(In support) The policy in this bill is similar to policies enacted in other states. When the policy was in effect in Washington, child support payments increased.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying (Civil Rights & Judiciary):** Alex Hur and Emil Floresca, Statewide Poverty Action Network.

**Persons Testifying (Appropriations):** Alex Hur, Statewide Poverty Action Network.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Civil Rights & Judiciary):** None.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Appropriations):** None.