

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 6623

As Passed House - Amended:
March 6, 2020

Title: An act relating to reducing funding restrictions for host homes.

Brief Description: Reducing host home funding restrictions.

Sponsors: Senators Darneille, Kuderer, Warnick, Zeiger, Das, Nguyen and Saldaña.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Human Services & Early Learning: 2/21/20, 2/26/20 [DPA].

Floor Activity:

Passed House - Amended: 3/6/20, 97-0.

**Brief Summary of Bill
(As Amended by House)**

- Removes the prohibition on host home programs receiving more than \$100,000 per year in public funding and individual host homes receiving any government funding to be exempt from foster licensure.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & EARLY LEARNING

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Senn, Chair; Callan, Vice Chair; Frame, Vice Chair; Dent, Ranking Minority Member; Eslick, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; McCaslin, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Corry, Goodman, Griffey, Kilduff, Klippert, Lovick and Ortiz-Self.

Staff: Luke Wickham (786-7146).

Background:

Exemptions from Foster Licensure.

Any person, group, or facility that receives children for control, care, or maintenance outside their own homes or that places, arranges the placement of, or assists in the placement of

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children must have a license provided by the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF).

The following individuals or entities are exempt from the licensing requirement:

- certain relatives;
- adoptive parents and guardians;
- situations where parents agree to out-of-home placement and the placement is not receiving state payment for the placement;
- exchange students;
- children entering the country with visas meeting the criteria for medical care;
- certain schools;
- certain hospitals;
- licensed physicians or lawyers;
- certain training centers for individuals with developmental disabilities;
- certain agencies in operation prior to 1957 not receiving governmental assistance;
- certain persons approved for placement by a court;
- certain agencies operated by governmental entities or Indian tribes;
- certain security programs for juvenile offenders;
- agencies located on a federal military reservation; and
- host home programs and host homes.

Host Home Programs.

To qualify for exemption from licensure, host home programs must:

- recruit and screen potential homes in the program, including performing background checks on the individuals living in the home who are over age 18;
- screen and provide case management to youth in the program;
- obtain a notarized permission slip or limited power of attorney from the parent or legal guardian of the youth authorizing the youth to participate in the program;
- obtain insurance;
- provide mandatory reporter and confidentiality training; and
- register as a nonprofit organization with the Office of the Secretary of State.

A host home is defined as a private home that volunteers to host youth in need of temporary placement that is associated with a host home program.

Any host home program that receives government funding must report certain information to the Office of Homeless Youth Prevention and Protection Programs. To qualify for exemption from foster licensure, a host home program is prohibited from receiving more than \$100,000 per year in public funding and an individual host home may not receive any government funding.

Foster Licensure Requirements.

In addition to applying for a foster license through the DCYF, an individual may apply for a foster license through a Child Placing Agency (CPA) that has been licensed by the DCYF to supervise foster homes. These CPAs may certify to the DCYF that an individual meets the licensing requirements. The DCYF has the final approval for licensing an individual who is certified by a CPA.

To be considered for a foster care license, an applicant must:

- be at least 21 years of age;
- have sufficient income to support themselves without relying on foster care payment;
- discipline children in a positive manner without the use of physical punishment;
- provide supervision appropriate to the age or specific behavior of the child as outlined by the social worker; and
- complete first aid/cardiopulmonary resuscitation training, blood-borne pathogens training, licensing orientation, and preservice training.

Any adult living in a potential foster home must:

- complete a criminal background check with the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Washington State Patrol (WSP);
- complete a child abuse and neglect registry check from each state they lived in over the past five years; and
- submit tuberculosis tests dated within the last year.

Youth ages 16 to 18 years old in the household must complete a WSP check. A DCYF licensor will also assess an applicant's ability to provide a safe home and to provide the quality of care needed by children placed in the home.

All licensed family foster homes are required to complete the following ongoing training:

- 36 hours during their first three-year licensing period;
- 30 hours during their second three-year licensing period; and
- 24 hours during all subsequent three-year licensing periods.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The prohibition on host home programs receiving more than \$100,000 per year in public funding and individual host homes receiving any government funding to be exempt from foster licensure is removed. "Host home program" is defined as a program that provides support to individual host homes and meets certain existing requirements.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The prohibition on host homes receiving public funding prevents any local funding in addition to any other government funding. Host homes are alternatives to having youth shelters around the state. The largest host home program is in Mason County, which has about 60 homes. Host home programs in Mason County and Tacoma had a 100 percent graduation rate and had zero releases to homelessness. There are host home programs in Seattle, Tacoma, Yakima, and Mason County. There are many more host programs that are trying to start up. Host homes provide a small, grassroots answer to homelessness. Young

mothers have used the support of host homes to keep their children in their care. Removing the funding restriction will allow host home programs to grow. When young people don't have to worry about homelessness, they can focus on education and development. Host home families complete various trainings before becoming a host family. When there is a need for a host home for a young person, the young person will meet with the family to decide whether it is a good match. The young person has as much personal choice in determining whether this is a good fit as the host family.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Darneille, prime sponsor; and Lori Cavender, Washington Host Home Coalition.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.