

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESB 5691

As Reported by House Committee On:
Human Services, Youth, & Early Learning

Title: An act relating to resource and assessment centers.

Brief Description: Concerning resource and assessment centers.

Sponsors: Senators Warnick and Shewmake.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Human Services, Youth, & Early Learning: 3/21/23, 3/24/23 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill
(As Amended By Committee)

- Allows resource and assessment centers (RACs) to be financially dependent on the state to operate.
- Allows RACs to provide care for children up to age 17 for up to three business days, and to address placement disruptions for children who have not been removed from a foster home because of the child's behavior or safety concerns.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES, YOUTH, & EARLY LEARNING

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Senn, Chair; Cortes, Vice Chair; Taylor, Vice Chair; Eslick, Ranking Minority Member; Couture, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Callan, Dent, Goodman, Rule and Walsh.

Staff: Luke Wickham (786-7146).

Background:

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

Resource and Assessment Centers.

A Resource and Assessment Center (RAC) provides short-term emergency and crisis care for a period up to 72 hours, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays, to children who have been removed from their parent's or guardian's care by the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) Child Protective Services and/or law enforcement. An RAC may:

- provide care for children birth through age 12, or for children ages 13 through 17 who have a sibling or siblings under age 13 who are being admitted to the RAC;
- operate up to 24 hours a day, and up to seven days per week; and
- not be used to address placement disruptions for children who have been removed from a foster home because of behavior or safety concerns.

The DCYF may provide a license to an RAC if:

- there is a demonstrated need in the community;
- the RAC will be primarily staffed by trained volunteers; and
- the RAC is not financially dependent on reimbursement from the state to operate.

The licensing rules for an RAC allow:

- a sufficient number of trained volunteers to meet the staffing requirements;
- flexibility in hours of operation that allow the RAC to close if there are no children in its care; and
- the ability to operate in a residential area.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The RACs are no longer required to demonstrate that they are not dependent on reimbursement from the state to operate.

The RACs may:

- provide care for children birth through age 17 at the discretion of the RAC (instead of birth through age 12, and children ages 13 through 17 who have a sibling at the RAC);
- provide care for children for up to three business days, or up to seven business days with the approval of the DCYF (instead of up to 72 hours, excluding weekends and holidays); and
- be used to provide emergency initial care for children as they enter care and respite care, and address placement disruptions for children who have not been removed from a foster home because of behavior or safety concerns.

Amended Bill Compared to Engrossed Bill:

The striking amendment makes a technical change to align the definition of an RAC with the provisions of the bill, which allow a resource and assessment center to provide care for

children for up to three business days, or up to seven business days with DCYF approval.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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) This bill provides another tool in the toolbox to allow children to find the appropriate care.

This bill would give RACs, of which there are two in the state located in Bellingham and Ellensburg, a bit more flexibility to be helpful in a wider range of situations.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Judy Warnick, prime sponsor; and Ray Deck III, Skookum Kids.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.