
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6721

State of Washington 60th Legislature 2008 Regular Session

By Senate Human Services & Corrections (originally sponsored by Senators Regala, Kohl-Welles, and Rasmussen)

READ FIRST TIME 02/08/08.

1 AN ACT Relating to a joint select legislative task force on
2 guardians ad litem in cases under Titles 13 and 26 RCW; creating a new
3 section; and providing an expiration date.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1)(a) A joint select legislative task force
6 on guardians ad litem in cases under Titles 13 and 26 RCW is
7 established, with members as provided in this subsection.

8 (i) The president of the senate shall appoint one member from each
9 of the two largest caucuses of the senate.

10 (ii) The speaker of the house of representatives shall appoint one
11 member from each of the two largest caucuses of the house of
12 representatives.

13 (iii) The president of the senate and the speaker of the house of
14 representatives jointly shall appoint the following members of the task
15 force:

16 (A) A representative from a statewide domestic violence advocacy
17 group;

18 (B) A representative from a community sexual assault program;

1 (C) Two birth parents with at least one representing the interests
2 of low-income parents;

3 (D) A representative of a statewide foster parents association;

4 (E) A representative from a qualified legal aid provider that
5 receives funding from the office of civil legal aid;

6 (F) One person who acts as a paid guardian ad litem;

7 (G) One person who acts as an unpaid guardian ad litem;

8 (H) One private attorney who represents parents under Title 13 or
9 26 RCW;

10 (I) One professional who evaluates families for the purposes of
11 determining the custody or placement decisions of children;

12 (J) One superior court judge who is familiar with cases under
13 Titles 13 and 26 RCW;

14 (K) One court commissioner who is familiar with cases under Titles
15 13 and 26 RCW;

16 (L) A representative from the Washington state court-appointed
17 special advocates;

18 (M) A representative from the administrative office of the courts
19 who has participated in developing the curricula under RCW 2.56.030(1);

20 (N) A representative of public defenders who represent children
21 under Title 13 or 26 RCW; and

22 (O) An attorney who represents parents from the office of public
23 defense's parents' representation program.

24 (vi) The following shall also be members of the task force:

25 (A) A representative from the attorney general's office who
26 currently handles Title 13 RCW cases;

27 (B) A person designated by the secretary of the department of
28 social and health services who has experience working on dependency
29 cases under Title 13 RCW; and

30 (C) The office of the family and children's ombudsman or the
31 ombudsman's designee.

32 (b) The task force shall choose its cochairs from among its
33 legislative membership. The legislative members of the task force
34 shall convene the first meeting of the task force.

35 (2) The task force shall review the following issues:

36 (a) The implementation of the results of the review and study as
37 directed by RCW 2.56.150;

1 (b) The feasibility and desirability of establishing statewide
2 standards regarding fees and costs for services performed by guardians
3 ad litem;

4 (c) The training curriculum currently developed by the
5 administrative office of the courts under RCW 2.56.030(15) and the
6 desirability of requiring specialized training for cases involving
7 special needs children;

8 (d) Applicable federal laws impacting Washington's guardians ad
9 litem statutes;

10 (e) RCW 13.34.100 and the exceptions to the appointment of
11 guardians ad litem for children in dependencies;

12 (f) Court oversight of the qualifications and performance of
13 guardians ad litem;

14 (g) The feasibility and desirability of establishing statewide
15 standards regarding grievance and removal procedures and remedies;

16 (h) The feasibility and desirability of establishing statewide
17 standards for guardians ad litem including requiring legal training for
18 volunteer guardians ad litem;

19 (i) The feasibility and desirability of establishing statewide
20 model protocols to be used by guardians ad litem for screening and
21 interviewing parties, witnesses, and children, and developing parenting
22 plan recommendations in cases involving allegations of limiting factors
23 under RCW 26.09.191; and

24 (j) Other issues deemed relevant to improving the practice of
25 guardians ad litem in cases under Titles 13 and 26 RCW.

26 (3) Staff support for the task force must be provided by senate
27 committee services and the house of representatives office of program
28 research.

29 (4) The task force may form an executive committee, create
30 subcommittees, designate alternative representatives, and define other
31 procedures, as needed, for the operation of the task force.

32 (5) The task force, where appropriate, may consult with individuals
33 from the public or private sector or ask the individuals to establish
34 an advisory committee. Members of such an advisory committee are not
35 entitled to expense reimbursement.

36 (6) The administrative office of the courts shall cooperate with
37 the task force and provide information as the chair or cochairs may
38 request.

1 (7) Legislative members of the task force shall be reimbursed for
2 travel expenses under RCW 44.04.120. Nonlegislative members, except
3 those representing an employee or organization, are entitled to be
4 reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with RCW 43.03.050 and
5 43.03.060.

6 (8) The expenses of the task force must be paid jointly by the
7 senate and house of representatives. Task force expenditures are
8 subject to approval by the senate facilities and operations committee
9 and the house of representatives executive rules committee, or their
10 successor committees.

11 (9) The task force shall report its findings and recommendations to
12 the appropriate committees of the legislature by December 31, 2008.

13 (10) This section expires January 1, 2009.

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