
SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 2085

State of Washington

61st Legislature

2009 Regular Session

By House Early Learning & Children's Services (originally sponsored by Representatives Walsh, Kagi, and Kenney)

READ FIRST TIME 02/23/09.

1 AN ACT Relating to promoting more efficient and prompt relative
2 searches for children requiring out-of-home placement in dependency
3 proceedings; adding a new section to chapter 74.13 RCW; and creating a
4 new section.

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

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that children needing
7 out-of-home placement in dependency and termination proceedings are
8 often best served when they are placed with relatives or other suitable
9 persons with whom they have a positive relationship. The legislature
10 further finds that state and federal law recognizes the potential
11 benefit to children of being placed with appropriate relatives and
12 other suitable persons. The legislature also finds that in order to
13 best support the child and reduce the likelihood of multiple
14 placements, the search for potential placements for a child should be
15 prompt, efficient, comprehensive, and conducted at the earliest
16 indication the child has been, or is likely to be, removed from home by
17 court order. The legislature intends to increase the efficiency and
18 expedite the search process for relatives and other suitable persons

1 who may be placement options for a child by directing the department of
2 social and health services to enter into a performance contract with a
3 service provider in one demonstration region.

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 74.13 RCW
5 to read as follows:

6 (1) The department shall contract in one demonstration region for
7 a relative search service provider, with the goal of earlier
8 identification of more persons who can be appropriate and stable
9 placement options for children in dependency or termination
10 proceedings. The department shall select the region with the lowest
11 rate of relative placements as of the effective date of this act. The
12 terms of the performance contract shall:

13 (a) Specify that the search process shall seek to identify
14 relatives, as described in RCW 74.15.020(2)(a) and other suitable
15 persons as described in RCW 13.34.130(1)(b) at the earliest indication
16 the child is or will be in need of an out-of-home placement;

17 (b) Describe the methods to be used by the department and the
18 contractor for gathering preliminary information about the child, the
19 family, and significant relationships, including a process for
20 gathering and documenting preliminary information from the parents and
21 the child, unless by virtue of age or disability, the child is unable
22 to communicate such information;

23 (c) Include processes and timelines for the contractor to provide
24 the names of all persons identified during the search process, whether
25 successfully contacted or not, as possible placement options for a
26 child;

27 (d) Describe how the contractor shall make the initial contact with
28 a potential placement resource, as well as how the information from the
29 initial contact will be transmitted to the department for further
30 review and a final determination of whether the potential placement
31 resource meets minimum criteria for a child's out-of-home placement
32 under chapter 13.34 RCW, and whether the department will seek court
33 approval for such placement based on the child's best interests;

34 (e) Describe the performance outcomes to be measured under the
35 contract, the majority of which must directly relate to earlier
36 identification of appropriate and stable placement options for children
37 needing out-of-home care in dependency or termination proceedings; and

1 (f) Include any other elements necessary to comply with state or
2 federal laws or to assure that performance under the contract is
3 aligned with other elements of child protection and child welfare
4 practices, including state and agency policies for the health, safety,
5 and well-being of children.

6 (2) The department may incorporate the contract required under this
7 section with another performance contract if doing so is likely to
8 result in improved administrative efficiencies or improved outcomes for
9 children.

10 (3) The department shall brief the governor and the legislature by
11 September 1, 2010, regarding performance under the contract and
12 recommend whether and how the same or similar approach to the search
13 for relatives and other suitable persons should be expanded to other
14 regions of the state.

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