

FINAL BILL REPORT

HB 1687

C 13 L 95
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Providing for distribution of appropriations for court-appointed special advocate programs.

Sponsors: Representatives Lambert, Costa, Padden, Appelwick, Fuhrman, Grant, Sheahan, Tokuda, Chappell, Thibaudeau, Veloria, Morris, Hickel, Huff, Patterson and Mastin.

House Committee on Law & Justice
House Committee on Appropriations
Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections

Background: Courts are authorized to appoint special advocates, or guardians ad litem, to represent the interests of children in cases brought in family or juvenile court. Courts must appoint a guardian ad litem for a child in any case where it is alleged that the child has been abused or neglected.

A guardian ad litem is considered an officer of the court. The role of the guardian ad litem is to protect the best interests of the child, to collect and report information regarding the child's situation, and to monitor both appropriateness of and compliance with any court order regarding the child. The guardian has access to all information available to the state, must be notified of all court proceedings, and is empowered to present evidence and examine witnesses.

Guardian ad litem services are provided through court-appointed special advocate programs.

A corporation may be designated as a public benefit nonprofit corporation if it complies with all the requirements of the Washington Nonprofit Corporation Act, and holds, or is not required to apply for, tax exempt status under federal law.

Summary: The Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development (CTED) is required to distribute all funds appropriated by the Legislature for the statewide technical support, development, and enhancement of court-appointed special advocate programs.

Criteria are established that an organization providing such services must meet to be eligible for funding. To receive funding, an organization must develop and support

court-appointed special advocate programs on a statewide basis. All of the guardians ad litem working under those programs must be volunteers receiving no payment for their services. Finally, the organization must be a public benefit nonprofit corporation.

If more than one organization is found eligible to receive funding, CTED is required to develop criteria for allocating all appropriated money among those organizations.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	96	1
Senate	47	0

Effective: July 23, 1995