

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2217

As Reported By House Committee On:
Children & Family Services
Appropriations

Title: An act relating to at-risk youth.

Brief Description: Changing provisions for at-risk youth.

Sponsors: Representatives Carrell, Mitchell, Thompson, Cooke, Boldt, Backlund and Johnson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Children & Family Services: 1/18/96, 1/26/96 [DPS];
Appropriations: 2/1/96, 2/3/96 [DP2S(w/o sub CFS)].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Cooke, Chairman; Lambert, Vice Chairman; Stevens, Vice Chairman; Tokuda, Ranking Minority Member; Brown, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Boldt; Buck; Carrell; Dickerson; Patterson and Sterk.

Staff: David Knutson (786-7146).

Background: In 1995, the Legislature enacted the Becca Bill, related to at-risk youth. The service system for runaway and at-risk youth was modified to provide for secure crisis residential center facilities to house youth. Court procedures for children in need of supervision were established. Parents were given greater authority over their children related to treatment needs and supervision. Harboring notification requirements were changed, and the failure to notify parents, law enforcement, or the Department of Social and Health Services when a youth was harbored was made a misdemeanor. The courts were granted greater authority to provide treatment and impose restrictions on habitual runaways. The Governor vetoed several provisions of the Becca Bill related to crisis residential centers, treatment for habitual runaways, parental notification requirements for chemical dependency, mental health treatment providers, and school personnel.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The court is authorized to place a child in need of services or an at-risk youth in a staff secure treatment facility. Violation of harboring notification requirements will be treated as a licensing violation for licensed child serving agencies. Violation of the harboring notification requirements will be a misdemeanor for other persons. Chemical dependency providers and mental health providers must provide parents with notice of a request for treatment within 48 hours for inpatient treatment and seven days for outpatient treatment. School personnel must provide parents with notice of referring their children for treatment within 48 hours. Appropriations are provided for placements in staff secure treatment programs, intensive non-categorical treatment programs, and to address local juvenile court and family reconciliation services effects related to the passage in 1995 of E2SSB 5439. Technical amendments related to social services and court procedures for at-risk youth and children in need of supervision are included.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The requirement that parents pay \$50 per day for their child's stay in a crisis residential center is removed. The requirement that a habitual runaway be treated in a facility that could include a secure facility is removed and replaced with a process for placing at-risk youth or children in need of services in a staff secure facility. The ability of the court to suspend a youth's driver's license is removed. Appropriations to fund the provisions of E2SSB 5439 and the provisions of SHB 2217 are provided. Violations of the harboring notification requirement are changed as they relate to licensed child serving agencies. Notice requirements for inpatient and outpatient treatment programs and providers are changed. Technical amendments designed to address specific implementation difficulties related to E2SSB 5439 are included.

Appropriation: The sum of \$13.7 million is appropriated from the general fund to the Department of Social and Health Services.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 17, 1996.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: Several issues related to at-risk youth and children in need of supervision must be addressed to ensure changes begun in 1995 are completed. Without the money to implement the new policies in E2SSB 5439, little will change.

Testimony Against: Habitual runaways should not be locked up in order to receive treatment. Notification requirements for inpatient and outpatient treatment providers should be modified. Failing to comply with the harboring notification requirements should not be a misdemeanor for agencies serving children.

Testified: (Con) Richard Warner, Citizens Commission on Human Rights; Jennifer Strus, Department of Social and Health Services; Rachael Myers, National Association of Social Workers; Pete Berknet, Children's Alliance; (Pro) Seth Dawson, Common Ground for Children; Ruth Goode; and Brenda Jones and Jean Williams, Runaway Alliance.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The second substitute bill be substituted therefor and the second substitute bill do pass and do not pass the substitute bill by Committee on Children & Family Services. Signed by 30 members: Representatives Huff, Chairman; Clements, Vice Chairman; Pelesky, Vice Chairman; H. Sommers, Ranking Minority Member; Valle, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Basich; Beeksma; Brumsickle; Carlson; Chappell; Cooke; Crouse; Dellwo; Dyer; Foreman; Grant; Hargrove; Hickel; Jacobsen; Kessler; Lambert; Linville; McMorris; Poulsen; Reams; Rust; Sehlin; Sheahan; Talcott and Wolfe.

Staff: Beth Redfield (786-7130).

Summary of Recommendation of Committee on Appropriations Compared to Recommendation of Committee on Children & Family Services: The appropriations are deleted. DSHS is authorized, within funds appropriated for the purpose, to contract for a transitional living program for runaways who have the ability to live with relative independence.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 31, 1996.

Effective Date Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The bill picks up where the "Becca Law" left off, addressing the issues raised by the vetoed sections of that bill. DSHS supports the substitute bill.

Testimony Against: Although the substitute does make the Becca Law more reasonable, it would be better to repeal the law. Youth should not be locked up; they only need to know their options and can be reasoned with.

Testified: Rep. Mike Carrell (prime sponsor); Jennifer Strus, Children's Administration, DSHS (pro); and Kiale Staveland (pro with concerns).