

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 6245

As Reported By House Committee On:
Health Care

Title: An act relating to child death investigations.

Brief Description: Requiring child death investigations and reports.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Thibaudeau, Prentice, Goings, Wood, Sheldon, Winsley, Quigley, Wojahn, Smith, Fraser, Moyer, Franklin, McAuliffe, Deccio and Rasmussen).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care: 2/23/96 [DPA].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Dyer, Chairman; Backlund, Vice Chairman; Hymes, Vice Chairman; Cody, Ranking Minority Member; Casada; Conway; Crouse; Morris; Sherstad and Skinner.

Staff: Antonio Sanchez (786-7383).

Background: Last year legislation was passed (SHB 1035) requiring the Department of Social and Health Services and coroners, medical examiners, and others to develop a process for consistent review of the unexpected deaths of minors in the care of the Department of Social and Health Services. The group submitted a report to the Legislature in December 1995. A series of recommendations was developed from that report.

Summary of Amended Bill: The Department of Social and Health Services regional administrators are required to perform fact-finding, in the event of unexpected deaths of minors that are in the care of DSHS. After receiving the results of the fact-finding, a multidisciplinary community child death review team must be convened to review the unexpected or unexplained child's death. Results of these reviews must be provided in an annual joint report to the Legislature. Cases involving stillborn infants in hospitals or predischARGE deaths of infants delivered in neonatal intensive care units in hospitals are excluded from the terms and conditions required in bill.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: Law enforcement is added to the list of groups that the regional administrators can consult with when performing the fact-finding investigation.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This bill is an important step forward from last years legislation and will serve to make the investigation process more effective and meaningful. Foster parents support this bill because it makes the process more institutionalized.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Pat Thibaudeau, prime sponsor; Jeffery Norman, Department of Social and Health Services, Division of Children and Family Services; Dr. Maxine Hays, Department of Health; Martha Reed, Washington Association of Coroners; and Don Knapp, Foster Parents Association.