

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 2387

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Human Services & Corrections, February 15, 1996

Title: An act relating to reports of abuse of children and adult dependent and developmentally disabled persons.

Brief Description: Requiring department of corrections personnel to report suspected abuse of children and adult dependent and developmentally disabled persons.

Sponsors: Representatives Cooke, Costa, Tokuda, Brown, Dellwo, Murray, Patterson, Mitchell and Silver; by request of Department of Social and Health Services and Department of Corrections.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services & Corrections: 2/15/96 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Hargrove, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Kohl, Long, Moyer, Prentice, Schow, Strannigan, Thibaudeau and Zarelli.

Staff: Andrea McNamara (786-7483)

Background: Certain professionals are required by law to report incidents of abuse or neglect of children, dependent adults, or the developmentally disabled when there is reasonable cause to believe abuse or neglect has occurred. These professionals include police officers, nurses, social service counselors, psychologists, pharmacists, licensed child care providers, juvenile probation officers, and Department of Social and Health Services employees.

A report must be made whether the professional became aware of the possible abuse during or outside the course of his or her employment. Professionals making good faith, truthful reports are immune from civil or criminal liability arising out of the making such reports.

Summary of Amended Bill: Certain Department of Corrections (DOC) personnel are added to the list of professionals who are required to report suspected instances of abuse or neglect of a child, adult dependent, or a developmentally disabled person. The DOC personnel who are made mandatory reporters include those who, in the course of their employment, observe offenders or the children with whom the offenders are in contact.

The mandatory reporting requirement applies only when, as a result of observations or information received in the course of their employment, DOC personnel have reasonable cause to believe abuse or neglect occurred.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: The striking amendment limits the Department of Corrections personnel who would become mandatory reporters to only those personnel who, in the course of their employment, observe offenders or the children with whom the offenders have contact. The striking amendment further limits the duty of mandatory reporting to only those incidents department personnel learn about through the course of their employment.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested. See fiscal note for SB 6672.

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

Testimony For: Department of Corrections (DOC) employees used to be mandated reporters when corrections was within the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), and this bill would restore that consistency. DOC and DSHS have been working to increase collaboration on cases and families they have in common: this is one more element of that collaborative process.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO (striking amendment): Dick Anderson, Division of Children and Family Services, Department of Social and Health Services; Victoria Roberts, Division of Community Corrections, Department of Corrections.