

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6672

As Passed Senate, February 9, 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: Senators Hargrove, Long and Oke; by request of Department of Social and Health Services and Department of Corrections.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services & Corrections: 1/31/96 [DP].
Passed Senate, 2/9/96, 47-1.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

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

Staff: Andrea McNamara (786-7483)

Background: While supervising offenders in the community, Department of Corrections (DOC) personnel often observe the homes, families, and living conditions of offenders and the children with whom they are in contact. As a result of the supervision, DOC staff may observe signs of child maltreatment or neglect.

Department of Corrections personnel are not currently included on the list of professionals who are mandated to report suspected abuse and neglect of children, dependent adults, or people with developmental disabilities.

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) is requesting this legislation to encourage the reporting of dangerous conditions for children and to facilitate joint planning between DSHS and DOC to protect children and vulnerable adults who may be residing with an offender or at a residence where an offender will be residing.

Summary of 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.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

House Amendment(s): The amendment makes all Department of Corrections personnel mandatory reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect, rather than just those personnel who work with offenders and the children with whom they are in contact.