

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1864

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

Title: An act relating to prevention and early intervention.

Brief Description: Regarding infants who test positive at birth for drugs or alcohol.

Sponsors: Representatives Cooke, Dickerson, Boldt and McDonald.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Children & Family Services: 2/20/97, 2/27/97 [DPS];
Appropriations: 3/8/97 [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; Boldt, Vice Chairman; Bush, Vice Chairman; Tokuda, Ranking Minority Member; Kastama, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Ballasiotes; Carrell; Dickerson; Gombosky; McDonald and Wolfe.

Staff: David Knutson (786-7146).

Background: Administrators of hospitals and similar institutions and physicians are authorized to detain children if they believe the child would be in imminent danger if returned to the care and custody of the parent, guardian, custodian, or other person legally responsible for the child.

Summary of Substitute Bill: If a baby is born addicted to alcohol or drugs, the administrator of a hospital or similar institution, nurse practitioners, and physicians are required to detain the baby. The baby may be held at a hospital, pediatric interim care facility, or similar program. Child protective services will refer mothers of detained babies to appropriate mandatory treatment programs. Babies needing drug withdrawal will be supervised by licensed health care professionals.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Nurse practitioners will also be able to detain a baby born addicted. Mothers of detained babies will be referred to mandatory treatment programs.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on July 1, 1997.

Testimony For: Nurse practitioners attend the birth of many babies who are born addicted. They should also be able to detain an addicted baby. To be effective, treatment programs should be made mandatory for mothers who give birth to addicted babies.

Testimony Against: If mothers know they will be referred to child protective services they will avoid health care professionals and give birth at home.

Testified: Terry Kohl, ARNP United (pro); Linda Grant, Association of Alcoholism and Addictions Programs (pro with suggested amendments); Sherilynn Casey, Department of Health (con); and Therese Grant, Birth to 3 (with concerns).

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 31 members: Representatives Huff, Chairman; Alexander, Vice Chairman; Clements, Vice Chairman; Wensman, Vice Chairman; H. Sommers, Ranking Minority Member; Doumit, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Gombosky, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Benson; Carlson; Chopp; Cody; Cooke; Crouse; Dyer; Grant; Keiser; Kenney; Kessler; Lambert; Linville; Lisk; Mastin; McMorris; Parlette; Poulsen; Regala; D. Schmidt; Sehlin; Sheahan; Talcott and Tokuda.

Staff: Jason Hall (786-7145).

Summary of Recommendation of Committee on Appropriations Compared to Recommendation of Committee on Children & Family Services: The second substitute bill renders the bill null and void if specific funding is not provided in the biennial budget by June 30, 1997.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on July 1, 1997. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

Testimony For: This bill will actually produce a net savings by reaping greater savings down the road than the size of the expenditure today. Right now, mothers aren't identified in maternity wards. In some cases they take their infants home and try to detoxify the children themselves with methadone. Fathers' drug problems are not addressed in the bill but could be in the future.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Suzette Cooke, prime sponsor; and Jennifer Strus, Department of Social and Health Services.