

HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS

HB 1070

Background: *The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) was established in 1970. The DSHS was designed to "integrate and coordinate all those activities involving provision of care for individuals who, as a result of their economic, social or health condition, require financial assistance, institutional care, rehabilitation, or other social and health services."*

Approximately half of the clients of the DSHS are children and many of the functions of the agency are related to children and families. These functions include collection of child support; child protective services; services for juvenile offenders; and mental health, developmental disabilities, and alcohol and substance abuse services for children. Numerous bills have been introduced over the last decade to separate some or all of these functions and create a separate department of children and family services.

Summary: *A new Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is created, effective July 1, 1998.*

The following functions of the DSHS are transferred to the new agency: all functions performed by the children's administration except child protective services, child support functions, and all of the functions of the divisions of mental health, developmental disabilities, and alcohol and substance abuse relating to children. Also transferred to the new agency are the functions of the Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development (DCTED) pertaining to early childhood education assistance programs, head start programs, and youth violence contracts.

Other transfers are also made, with the allocation of the functions to be determined by a plan. The functions of the DSHS relating to juvenile rehabilitation and the juvenile justice system are transferred to the Department of Corrections and the new DCFS. The functions of the DSHS relating to child protective services are transferred to the new DCFS and the county sheriffs. Program fraud investigations and internal investigations of the DSHS are transferred to the Washington State Patrol. However, local law enforcement agencies have the option of contracting for program fraud responsibilities.

The director of the Office of Financial Management, the secretary of the Department of Corrections, the chief of the Washington State Patrol, and the

director of the DCTED shall develop a reorganization plan. Intent language is stated for certain allocations. In allocating the functions of juvenile rehabilitation to the new DCFS and the Department of Corrections, the legislature intends that the plan incorporate the functions of treatment and sentencing provisions as of July 1, 1998. Relating to the allocation of child protective service functions, the legislature intends that because child abuse or neglect investigations frequently reveal criminal activity, the authority to conduct such investigations should be transferred to the county sheriffs in larger counties.

The reorganization plan shall be submitted to the Governor and the appropriate standing committees of the legislature by November 15, 1997, and any proposed legislation necessary to implement the plan shall be submitted by December 15, 1997.