

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1487

As Reported By House Committee On:
Children & Family Services

Title: An act relating to foster parents' rights.

Brief Description: Changing provisions relating to foster parents' rights.

Sponsors: Representatives Clements and Skinner.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Children & Family Services: 2/22/99, 2/25/99 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Retaliation or discrimination against foster parents is prohibited.
- Foster parents will receive information about the foster children they care for.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives D. Sommers, Republican Co-Chair; Tokuda, Democratic Co-Chair; Boldt, Republican Vice Chair; Kagi, Democratic Vice Chair; Campbell; Carrell; Dickerson; Eickmeyer; Kastama and Pflug.

Staff: David Knutson (786-7146).

Background:

Many foster parents fear reprisal if they disagree with the care plan established for a child in their care, or attempt to adopt a foster child. If a foster child destroys the property of a foster parent the Department of Social and Health Services will reimburse them for the depreciated value of the object. If a foster parent objects to the plan of care for their foster child they have limited recourse to challenge it.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Employees of the Department of Social and Health Services are prohibited from retaliating or discriminating against foster parents. The department will share information with the foster child's care giver and consult them in the development of the child's case plan. Foster parents will assist in family visitation and model effective parenting behavior for the natural family, and, if appropriate and they desire to, participate in the development of the child's service plan.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The application of administrative and judicial review rights for foster parents is removed. The requirement that the Department of Social and Health Services adopt rules governing all foster care and child welfare services programs provided by the department and its contractors is removed. The requirement that foster parents receive written notice five days prior to foster children being removed from their home is removed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: (Original bill) Foster parents are afraid that caseworkers will retaliate against them if they advocate for the foster child, seek to adopt a foster child, or disagree with a service plan prepared by the Department of Social and Health Services. Statutory protections for foster parents should be in place.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: (In support) Representative Jim Clements (prime sponsor); Alan Willoughby, Action for Kids in Care; Carole Holland, Department of Social and Health Services; and Darlene Flowers, Foster Parents Association of Washington.