

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5343

As Passed Senate, March 17, 1999

Title: An act relating to the education of foster children.

Brief Description: Requiring that school information be included in the passport provided to foster parents.

Sponsors: Senators Jacobsen, Shin, Kohl-Welles, Costa, Thibaudeau and Gardner.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services & Corrections: 2/5/99, 2/18/99 [DP].
Passed Senate, 3/17/99, 45-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Hargrove, Chair; Costa, Vice Chair; Franklin, Kohl-Welles, Long, Patterson, Sheahan, Stevens and Zarelli.

Staff: Lynn Hale (786-7430)

Background: A concern has been expressed that foster parents are not provided with current and accurate information regarding the educational status of the children who have been placed in their care. Current law requires that educational status be included on the passport provided to the foster parent but does not define what is meant by educational status. It has been suggested that the Legislature could ensure that needed information is provided to foster care parents by clarifying what educational information should be included.

Summary of Bill: The passport provided to foster parents must include, at a minimum, the name, address, and phone number of each school attended by the child in the last three years.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Strong support exists for the policy decision of providing information to foster parents. The advocates would like to have the department provide more information than is currently being required by this bill. Foster parents need the additional information to be able to work with the school directly to place the children in their care appropriately.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Richard Peet, Foster Parents Association of Washington State; Donna Christensen, Catholic Community Services; Laurie Lippold, Children's Home Society (with recommendations); Alan Willoughby, foster parent, Director, AFKIC (with concerns).

House Amendment(s): A new section was added to the common school provisions which states that if information is requested under the foster parent passport law, the school shall provide the Department of Social and Health Services the student's academic records, including an official transcript, placement history, information relating to disciplinary actions, and other records or information that may be pertinent to the student's future academic placements.