

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## ESB 6555

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As Passed Senate, February 15, 2000

**Title:** An act relating to the evaluations of foster children for long-term needs.

**Brief Description:** Ordering a study of evaluations of children needing long-term care.

**Sponsors:** Senators Long, Hargrove, Patterson, Costa, Eide, Winsley and Kohl-Welles.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Human Services & Corrections: 2/1/2000 [DP].  
Passed Senate, 2/15/2000, 47-0.

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### 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:** Jennifer Strus (786-7484)

**Background:** Over the past ten years, the Legislature has passed a number of initiatives to improve foster care services. One of those initiatives, passed in 1993, required the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to evaluate all children entering foster care within the first 30 days of placement to determine their need for long term care. It is not clear whether this requirement is being followed.

**Summary of Bill:** The department, by region, must report to the Legislature by December 31, 2000, and every six months thereafter on the number of children evaluated during the first 30 days of placement, the evaluation tool(s) used, the findings from the evaluation, how the department used the evaluation results to provide services to the foster child, and whether and how the evaluation results assisted the department in providing services.

The department must make the appropriate number of referrals to the foster care assessment program. The department must report to the Legislature by November 30, 2000, on the number of referrals, by region, to the foster care assessment program.

The department must report to the Legislature by December 15, 2000, on how it will use the foster care assessment program model to assess children as they enter out-of-home care.

The department must accomplish the above within existing resources.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Testimony For:** The bill presents a positive step in looking at up front assessments. Clarification is needed as to what is meant by the term "assessment."

**Testimony Against:** The bill requirements have a substantial fiscal impact on the agency and are not in the Governor's budget.

**Testified:** Laurie Lippold, Children's Home Society (pro); Jake Romo, Department of Social and Health Services (con).

**House Amendment(s):** The amendment requires DSHS to evaluate children within 60 rather than 30 days of placement. It explicitly states that the reporting requirements in the bill are not retroactive.