

SENATE BILL REPORT

2SSB 5480

As Passed Senate, February 13, 2002

Title: An act relating to children placed in the care of relatives.

Brief Description: Encouraging support services for kinship caregivers.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections (originally sponsored by Senators Fairley, McAuliffe, Eide, Rasmussen, Long, Thibaudeau, Kline, Franklin, Kohl-Welles, Regala and McCaslin).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services & Corrections: 2/2/01, 2/21/01 [DPS-WM]; 2/1/02, 2/7/02 [DP2S].

Ways & Means: 2/27/01; 1/24/02 [w/oRec-HSC].

Passed Senate: 2/13/02, 48-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: That Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 5480 be substituted therefor, and the second substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Hargrove, Chair; Costa, Vice Chair; Carlson, Franklin, Hewitt, Kastama, Kohl-Welles, Long and Stevens.

Staff: Edith Rice (786-7444)

Background: Relatives who take in children of family members (whether these are grandchildren, nieces or nephews, cousins etc.) are recognized as performing a vital function in our society. Children who might otherwise need to be placed in foster care are provided with a stable home, in a setting likely to enhance family reunification, with little need for intervention by the courts or the Department of Social and Health Services. The number of relatives caring for children of family members is increasing. A briefing of the policy issues would ensure that the needs of this special group would be recognized.

Summary of Bill: The Legislature recognizes the value of kinship care givers. The Department of Social and Health Services must convene a working group to review the kinship care givers study being conducted by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy, due June 2002. This working group identifies and prioritizes the policy issues to be considered by the Legislature, including consideration of a means test, related federal and state statutes, and options to address the issues legislatively, and briefs the appropriate committees in the Senate and House of Representatives by November 1, 2002.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 29, 2001.

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

Testimony For: Grandparents and other relative caregivers need support in taking on the added responsibility of raising children who might otherwise be put in foster care.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Edith Owen, P.C. Relatives Raising Children (pro); Linda Lillevik, Washington Defender Assn. (pro); Howard Winhler, Family Support Center (pro); Laurie Lippold, Children's Home Society (pro).