

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5932

As of February 5, 2002

Title: An act relating to audio recording of interviews of children disclosing sexual abuse.

Brief Description: Requiring audio recording of interviews of children disclosing sexual abuse.

Sponsors: Senators Kohl-Welles, Long, Hargrove, Kastama, Franklin, Stevens and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Judiciary: 2/26/01; 1/31/02 [w/o Rec-HSC].

Human Services & Corrections: 2/6/02.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Staff: Edith Rice (786-7444)

Background: The 1999, Legislature directed the Department of Social and Health Services to establish three pilot projects which were to follow written protocols and use different methods to conduct and preserve interviews with alleged child victims of sexual abuse. Each pilot project site utilized a different interview documentation method: videotaping, audiotaping, or teaming of social workers using near-verbatim documentation. The Washington State Institute for Public Policy was required to evaluate the pilot projects and report to the Legislature. Its report concluded that "electronic recording is clearly the most efficient and reliable method of documentation." Current law requires that a near verbatim written account of the disclosure interview be made.

Summary of Bill: Interviews of children disclosing sexual abuse must be audio recorded by recording device. This requirement may be waived on a case by case basis by management or because the child objected to being audio recorded. If the audio recording has been waived, records of the interviews continue to be kept in written, near verbatim form.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 4, 2002.

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