

SENATE BILL REPORT

2SSB 6356

As Passed Senate, February 16, 2002

Title: An act relating to the children's environmental health and protection advisory council.

Brief Description: Creating the children's environmental health and protection advisory council.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Franklin, Winsley, Fairley, Shin, Regala, Kline, Costa, Poulsen, Rasmussen, Keiser, Deccio, Kohl-Welles, Kastama, Prentice, Eide, McAuliffe, Parlette, Fraser, Long and Jacobsen).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 1/28/02, 2/6/02 [DPS].

Ways & Means: 2/11/02, 2/12/02 [DP2S].

Passed Senate: 2/16/02, 39-9.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6356 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Thibaudeau, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Costa, Deccio, Fraser and Winsley.

Staff: Rhoda Donkin (786-7198)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 6356 be substituted therefor, and the second substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Brown, Chair; Regala, Vice Chair; Fairley, Vice Chair; Fraser, Kline, Kohl-Welles, Poulsen, Rasmussen, B. Sheldon, Thibaudeau and Winsley.

Staff: Tim Yowell (786-7435)

Background: Studies have shown that children are more susceptible to exposure to environmental pollutants than adults. They are particularly vulnerable to such hazards as lead, pesticides, air pollutants, contaminated water, toxic waste, secondhand tobacco smoke, and industrial and home chemicals. Children are susceptible because they absorb toxins at a much higher rate relative to body weight than do adults. They also have not formed natural biological barriers that block toxins from entering the blood stream, and they tend to play in areas where they are exposed to toxins.

Summary of Bill: The Children's Environmental Health and Protection Advisory Council is created. Membership includes 15 people representing the Legislature, several state

agencies, parents of children who have been identified as having been exposed to an environmental hazard, and an expert in environmental toxicology.

The council must meet at least four times a year to review existing laws, rules, and regulations which may pose environmental hazards to the health of children. The state Board of Health provides staff support to the council. The council must report to the Governor and the Legislature by December of 2003 and 2004.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For (Health & Long-Term Care): Laws and regulations that don't protect children end up creating illnesses that are costly and sometimes tragic. Agencies need to collaborate to protect children.

Testimony Against (Health & Long-Term Care): This duplicates the current work of several agencies.

Testified (Health & Long-Term Care): Bill White, Dept. of Health (pro w/concerns); Marianne Seifert, WA State Board of Health (pro w/concerns); Gary King, WA Ed. Assn. (pro).

Testimony For (Ways & Means): The number of children suffering from asthma and other environmental-related illnesses is increasing. Identifying and addressing the causes of those illnesses would result in savings.

Testimony Against (Ways & Means): Implementing the legislation would cost almost 10 percent of the Board of Health's budget. While the board supports the intent of the legislation and is willing to seek private funding to implement it, it suggests that the bill be amended to allow for suspension of the bill's requirements if funding is not forthcoming.

Testified (Ways & Means): Senator Rosa Franklin, prime sponsor; Craig McLaughlin, State Board of Health (pro w/concerns).