
HOUSE BILL 1425

State of Washington 52nd Legislature 1991 Regular Session

By Representatives Brekke, Winsley and Leonard.

Read first time January 29, 1991. Referred to Committee on Human Services.

1 AN ACT Relating to the commission on runaway children; creating new
2 sections; and providing an expiration date.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** In 1979 the legislature enacted
5 procedures for families in conflict to address the problems of children
6 who run away from their families. Although the statute has been
7 amended several times in the past twelve years, a comprehensive study
8 of the effectiveness of its procedures has never been undertaken.
9 Therefore, the legislature finds that it is appropriate and timely that
10 a comprehensive study be conducted to review the operation of the
11 statute in light of the changing nature and needs of these children and
12 their families. To ensure that the state of Washington has progressive
13 and effective procedures for addressing the problems of runaway
14 children, the legislature finds that a review commission consisting of

1 persons with experience and expertise in the area of family conflict
2 should be established.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The commission on runaway children
4 is established and shall consist of the following members:

5 (a) Four legislators, one from each caucus in the house of
6 representatives selected by the speaker of the house of representatives
7 and one from each caucus in the senate selected by the president of the
8 senate;

9 (b) One superior court judge with experience in dealing with
10 runaway children and families in conflict, selected by the Washington
11 state superior court judges association;

12 (c) One prosecuting attorney with experience in dealing with
13 runaway children and families in conflict, selected by the Washington
14 association of prosecuting attorneys;

15 (d) One member representing either cities or counties, selected by
16 the executive committee;

17 (e) One member of the department of social and health services who
18 has experience and expertise in dealing with runaway children and
19 families in conflict, selected by the secretary of social and health
20 services to represent the department;

21 (f) One mental health specialist familiar with mental health issues
22 commonly affecting runaway children, selected by the executive
23 committee;

24 (g) One attorney whose practice regularly includes the filing of
25 alternative residential placement or at-risk youth petitions, selected
26 by the Washington state bar association;

27 (h) One member appointed by the governor's juvenile justice
28 advisory committee;

1 (i) One member who currently serves as a law enforcement official,
2 appointed by the executive committee;

3 (j) Three citizen members appointed by the executive committee;
4 and

5 (k) Two members representing private youth-serving agencies,
6 appointed by the alliance for children, youth, and families.

7 (2) The four legislative members shall serve on the executive
8 committee of the commission and shall select a chair from the
9 membership of the commission.

10 (3) The commission shall be staffed by the department of social and
11 health services.

12 (4) The commission members shall receive no compensation.
13 Legislators shall be reimbursed for their travel expenses as provided
14 in RCW 44.04.120. Other members of the commission shall be reimbursed
15 for travel expenses as provided in RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060.

16 (5) The commission may receive appropriations, grants, gifts, and
17 other payments from any governmental or other public or private entity
18 or person. Funds received may be used to defray operational costs or
19 to contract for technical services, subject to the approval of the
20 senate committee on facilities and operations and the house of
21 representatives executive rules committee.

22 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** The commission on runaway children shall
23 conduct a comprehensive review of the implementation of the procedures
24 for families in conflict act of 1979 both as it functioned in the
25 1980's and as it is currently functioning under the revised 1990
26 statute. The commission shall review these statutes in conjunction
27 with the dependency provisions of chapter 13.34 RCW. The commission
28 shall:

1 (a) Conduct a programmatic evaluation of the alternative
2 residential placement program, the crisis residential center program,
3 and the family reconciliation program;

4 (b) Critique the effectiveness of services provided by family
5 reconciliation services, crisis residential centers, and the
6 alternative residential placement program;

7 (c) Examine the current and preferred role of law enforcement;

8 (d) Report on the use and effectiveness of at-risk youth
9 petitions;

10 (e) Examine the relationship between children who run away from
11 their families and the need for dependency filings under chapter 13.34
12 RCW;

13 (f) Report on current methods of treatment that have proven
14 effective in reconciling families with runaway children where there is
15 no cause for a dependency filing; and

16 (g) Evaluate the performance of the department of social and health
17 services in implementing the provisions of chapters 13.32A and 13.34
18 RCW.

19 (2) In guiding the commission in its review, the legislature
20 reaffirms its declaration that the family should be nurtured as the
21 fundamental resource for children in our society and that the family
22 should remain intact unless a child's right to conditions of basic
23 nurture, health, or safety is jeopardized.

24 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** The commission shall report its findings
25 and recommendations to the appropriate standing committees of the
26 legislature by January 15, 1993.

27 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** This act shall expire June 30, 1993.