

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2598

As Reported By House Committee On:
Human Services

Title: An act relating to children and family services.

Brief Description: Authorizing children and family services at the local level.

Sponsors: Representatives H. Myers, Patterson, Dorn, Rust, Basich, Pruitt, Holm, Ogden, Springer, Roland, King and J. Kohl.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Human Services, February 3, 1994, DPS.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Leonard, Chair; Thibaudeau, Vice Chair; Cooke, Ranking Minority Member; Talcott, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Brown; Caver; Karahalios; Lisk; Patterson and Wolfe.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Padden.

Staff: Dave Knutson (786-7146).

Background: State services for children and families are provided through several state agencies. Each agency has its own approach to delivering services and may or may not include the community in identifying problems and developing solutions to address the needs of their community.

The Family Policy Council was established in statute to coordinate and improve services provided to children and families at the local level. The Family Policy Council currently includes the secretary of the Department of Social and Health Services, the secretary of the Department of Health, the commissioner of the Department of Employment Security, the director of the Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and four legislators.

Many services for children and families are provided to narrow categories of people and problems, making it difficult to address the often complex and unique needs of children and families. A system of services for children and families which relies on restrictive categorical funding is difficult for service providers who attempt to coordinate services. Children and families who receive services from categorical service systems may have to deal with several unrelated, uncoordinated service providers in their community.

Summary of Substitute Bill: A process is established that allows local communities to set priorities and coordinate services to children and families to meet local needs. Local communities will be partners with the state in planning, developing, implementing, and administering support systems to address the needs of each local community. The Family Policy Council is expanded to include the director of the Office of Financial Management, one representative each from counties, cities, or towns, and school districts, two citizens, and one business and union representative. Local consortiums which may submit proposals to the Family Policy Council for funding are renamed Community Family Councils. Their membership is set at between nine and 25 individuals. Community Family Councils will submit comprehensive plans to the Family Policy Council to coordinate and deliver services to children and families in their local community.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The Department of Corrections, two children services providers, and one business representative are removed from the Family Policy Council. The one representative of organized labor is added to the Family Policy Council. The size of the Community Family Council will be between nine and 25 members. The dates by which Community Family Councils will submit initial proposals and by which action may be taken to begin operation are delayed from October 30, 1994 to October 1, 1996. The ability to block grant service funding for children and family services is replaced with the creation of an unrestricted children and family services fund which Community Family Councils may apply for. Community Family Councils may also apply to the Family Policy Council to waive statutory and regulatory restrictions on the use of funds for children and families. Unless the Legislature specifically disapproves, the Family Policy Council is authorized to approve such waiver requests. An appropriation of \$6,000,000 is provided to the children and family services fund.

Fiscal Note: Requested January 21, 1994.

Appropriation: The sum of \$600,000 from the general fund-state to the Department of Social and Health Services.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: Services to children and families will be improved if they are locally planned and delivered.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Donna DeLeno, Washington Coalition Sexual Assault Programs (pro); Martha Westcott, Washington Coalition Sexual Assault Programs (pro); Stephanie K. Cline, Children's Home Society of Washington (pro); Maureen Howard, Washington State Coalition for Homeless (pro); Ned Dolejsi and Margaret Casey, Washington State Catholic Conference (pro); Jon Leveque, Governor's Office (pro); John Birnel, Washington Federal of State Employees (pro); Jean Wessman, Busse Nutley, Jane Johnson and Scott Johnson, Washington State Association of Counties (pro); Susan Crowley, City of Seattle (pro); and Jackie White, Association of Washington Cities (pro).