
**Children & Family Services
Committee**

HB 2189

Brief Description: Establishing a work group to address safety of child protective services and child welfare services staff.

Sponsors: Representatives Kagi, Hinkle, Dickerson, Roberts, Darneille, Simpson, Moeller, Morrell and Santos.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Department of Social and Health Services to establish a work group to develop policies and protocols to address the safety of Child Protective Services and Child Welfare Services staff.

Hearing Date: February 28, 2005.

Staff: Cynthia Forland (786-7152).

Background:

Child Protective Services (CPS) within the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) provides 24-hour, seven-day-a-week intake, screening, and investigative services for reports of suspected child abuse and neglect. CPS social workers investigate reports of child abuse and neglect to assess the safety and protection needs of children, and, when necessary, intervene by providing services designed to increase safety and protect children from further harm. When it appears that a child is in danger of being harmed or has already been seriously abused or neglected, CPS, with a police officer or court order putting the child in protective custody, places the child with a relative or in foster care.

Child Welfare Services (CWS) within the DSHS provides both permanency planning and intensive treatment services to children and families who may need help with chronic or serious problems that interfere with their ability to protect or parent children, such as on-going abuse and neglect or intensive medical needs. Services through CWS are provided to children and families when longer-term services are needed. Most children served through CWS are dependents of the state, in out-of-home care, or legally free for adoption.

Summary of Bill:

The DSHS is required to establish a work group to develop policies and protocols to address the safety of CPS and CWS staff.

Membership of the work group must include the following: representatives of the Children's Administration of the DSHS, including representatives of CPS staff and CWS staff; law enforcement; and prosecuting attorneys.

The DSHS must provide the developed policies and protocols to the Governor and the appropriate committees of the Legislature by December 1, 2005.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 22, 2005.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.