

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## HB 2189

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Human Services & Corrections, March 31, 2005

**Title:** An act relating to the safety of child protective services and child welfare services staff.

**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 History:** Passed House: 3/09/05, 97-0.

**Committee Activity:** Human Services & Corrections: 3/24/05, 3/31/05 [DPA].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Hargrove, Chair; Regala, Vice Chair; Stevens, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Carrell, McAuliffe and Thibaudeau.

**Staff:** Edith Rice (786-7444)

**Background:** Child protective services (CPS) in the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) provides intake, screening, and investigative services in response to reports of suspected child abuse and neglect. When it appears that a child is in danger of being harmed or has already been seriously abused or neglected the 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) in the DSHS may provide permanency planning as well as ongoing intensive treatment services, to children and families who may need long term help with chronic or serious problems that interfere with the parents ability to safely parent. Most children served through the CWS are dependents of the state, in out of home care, or are legally available for adoption.

**Summary of Amended Bill:** The DSHS is required to establish a work group to develop policies and protocols addressing the safety of CPS and CWS employees.

Membership must include representatives of the children's administration in the DSHS, including CPS and CWS staff from community service offices in largely rural as well as urban areas, law enforcement, and prosecuting attorneys.

Recommendations must include training to address highly volatile, threatening situations and de-escalation and preventive safety measures.

The DSHS must provide the developed policies and protocols to the Governor and the legislature by December 1, 2005.

**Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill:** Membership is further specified to include CPS and CWS staff from community service offices in largely rural as well as urban areas. Recommendations must additionally include training to address highly volatile, threatening situations and de-escalation and preventive safety measures.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

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

**Testimony For:** Recent events have highlighted the need for increased attention on the safety of social workers who may be required to visit homes. Little attention has been paid to worker safety. Those protocols that do exist should be standardized.

**Testimony Against:** This bill is one sided and does little to recognize the reasons that cause people to blow their stack. We need to be more careful with the way we treat families.

**Who Testified:** PRO: Representative Ruth Kagi, Representative Mary Lou Dickerson, prime sponsors; Edith Vance, Social Worker, Colville, Wa, DSHS; Uma Ahluwalia, Assistant Secretary, Children's Administration, DSHS.

CON: Dave Wood, AFRA, Families United.