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**HOUSE BILL 2383**

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**State of Washington**

**68th Legislature**

**2024 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Eslick, Taylor, and Jacobsen

Read first time 01/16/24. Referred to Committee on Civil Rights & Judiciary.

1 AN ACT Relating to reporting on dependency outcomes; amending RCW  
2 13.34.820 and 13.34.035; and creating a new section.

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

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** Dependency courts should work to ensure  
5 the well-being of dependent children and to ensure that every young  
6 person who leaves foster care has relational permanency - meaning  
7 they have various long-term relationships that help them feel loved  
8 and connected. This includes relationships with siblings, parents,  
9 family members, extended family, family friends, mentors, and where  
10 appropriate, former foster family members.

11 Legal permanency, achieved through reunification, guardianship,  
12 or adoption is important, but it is not the only way to provide a  
13 sense of belonging and meaningful connections for young people. The  
14 federal children's bureau has cautioned that, legal permanence alone  
15 does not guarantee secure attachments and lifelong relationships. The  
16 relational aspects of permanency are critically important and  
17 fundamental to overall well-being, administration on children, youth  
18 and families, information memorandum ACYF-CB-IM-20-09, January 5,  
19 2021. Relational permanency is one component of a child's overall  
20 well-being. Washington state's data collection should reflect the

1 importance of both relational and legal permanency as well as child  
2 well-being.

3 **Sec. 2.** RCW 13.34.820 and 2017 3rd sp.s. c 6 s 309 are each  
4 amended to read as follows:

5 (1) The administrative office of the courts, in consultation with  
6 the attorney general's office and the department, shall compile an  
7 annual report, providing information about ~~((eases that fail to meet  
8 statutory guidelines to achieve permanency for dependent children))~~  
9 dependency cases including available data about whether children in  
10 Washington state dependency cases are achieving relational  
11 permanency, whether cases meet statutory guidelines, and reasons why  
12 timelines are not met.

13 (2) ~~((The))~~ In compliance with RCW 43.01.036, the administrative  
14 office of the courts shall submit the annual report required by this  
15 section to appropriate committees of the legislature by December 1st  
16 of each year, beginning on December 1, 2007. The administrative  
17 office of the courts shall also submit the annual report to a  
18 representative of the foster parent association of Washington state,  
19 the office of civil legal aid, and the Washington state office of  
20 public defense.

21 (3) The annual report shall include information regarding whether  
22 foster parents received timely notification of dependency hearings as  
23 required by RCW 13.34.096 and 13.34.145 and whether caregivers  
24 submitted reports to the court.

25 (4) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this  
26 specific purpose, the administrative office of the courts shall, in  
27 consultation with others, identify measures of relational permanency  
28 and child well-being and shall report to the legislature by July 1,  
29 2025, in compliance with RCW 43.01.036, the following information:

30 (a) A plan for reporting on child well-being and relational  
31 permanency;

32 (b) How to make such information publicly available;

33 (c) What can be reported using existing data;

34 (d) What additional information should be collected; and

35 (e) What data-sharing agreements are necessary to ensure an  
36 accurate picture of the needs of families in the dependency system.

37 (5) In making these determinations the administrative office of  
38 the courts must consult with representatives who have knowledge of  
39 data collection systems from the office of the superintendent of

1 public instruction; the health care authority; the department of  
2 children, youth, and families; the department of social and health  
3 services; and any other entity holding relevant data or expertise.

4 (6) Consistent with RCW 13.50.280, to collect data necessary to  
5 evaluate the relational permanency and well-being of dependent  
6 children, the administrative office of the courts may execute data-  
7 sharing agreements with the office of the superintendent of public  
8 instruction, the health care authority, the department of children,  
9 youth, and families, and the department of social and health  
10 services.

11 **Sec. 3.** RCW 13.34.035 and 2009 c 491 s 6 are each amended to  
12 read as follows:

13 (1) The administrative office of the courts shall develop  
14 standard court forms and format rules for mandatory use by parties in  
15 dependency matters commenced under this chapter or chapter 26.44 RCW.  
16 Forms shall be developed not later than November 1, 2009, and the  
17 mandatory use requirement shall be effective January 1, 2010. The  
18 administrative office of the courts has continuing responsibility to  
19 develop and revise mandatory forms and format rules as appropriate.

20 (2) According to rules established by the administrative office  
21 of the courts, a party may delete unnecessary portions of the forms  
22 and may supplement the mandatory forms with additional material.

23 (3) Failure by a party to use the mandatory forms or follow the  
24 format rules shall not be a reason to dismiss a case, refuse a  
25 filing, or strike a pleading. The court may, however, require the  
26 party to submit a corrected pleading and may impose terms payable to  
27 the opposing party or payable to the court, or both.

28 (4) The administrative office of the courts shall distribute a  
29 master copy of the mandatory forms to all county court clerks. Upon  
30 request, the administrative office of the courts and county clerks  
31 must distribute the forms to the public and may charge for the cost  
32 of production and distribution of the forms. Private vendors also may  
33 distribute the forms. Distribution of forms may be in printed or  
34 electronic form.

35 (5) In order to effectuate the purposes of RCW 13.34.820, court  
36 forms may indicate whether an order or portion of an order was agreed  
37 or contested, and if contested, by which party or parties.

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