

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1940

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Human Services*

Title: An act relating to citizen foster care review boards operating under the jurisdiction of superior courts.

Brief Description: Establishing foster care citizen review boards.

Sponsor(s): Representatives Scott, Cole, Leonard, Winsley, Bowman, Rayburn, O'Brien and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Human Services, March 6, 1991, DPS.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
HUMAN SERVICES**

Majority Report: *That Substitute House Bill No. 1940 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.*
Signed by 10 members: Representatives Leonard, Chair; Riley, Vice Chair; Winsley, Ranking Minority Member; Tate, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Beck; Brekke; Hargrove; Hochstatter; R. King; and H. Myers.

Staff: David Knutson (786-7146).

Background: The Legislature authorized the operation of foster care citizen review boards during the 1989 legislative session. The citizen review boards are to provide periodic review of children in foster care, improve the quality of case review for children in foster care and their families, and involve the community in monitoring children in foster care. The findings and recommendations of foster care citizen review boards are advisory to the Department of Social and Health Services and the juvenile courts. Foster care citizen review boards have operated in Snohomish County and Yakima County since shortly after the 1989 legislative session. A question arose at the Snohomish County project, concerning the citizen review of Indian children who are placed in foster care. The Local Indian Child Welfare Advisory Committee (LICWAC), expressed an interest in participating in the foster care citizen review board process when an Indian child is involved. The

statutory authority to operate foster care citizen review boards expires on June 30, 1991.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The juvenile court is authorized to appoint the Local Indian Child Welfare Advisory Committee to serve as the citizen review board in cases involving Indian children. The Indian Child Welfare Advisory Committee will follow prescribed guidelines when it is involved in the review of Indian children in foster care. Foster care citizen review boards will operate in counties selected by the Office of Administer of the Courts. The timing and contents of case reviews of children in foster care are clarified to ensure the reviews take place within statutory limits. The expiration of the authority to operate foster care citizen review boards is repealed.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The number of citizen review boards is changed from three to a number supported by the appropriation and designated by the Office of Administrator for the Courts. The substitute bill clarifies that tribal sovereignty is not affected by the citizen review board process and does not apply in foster care cases before a tribal court. The appropriation is reduced by \$350,000.

Fiscal Note: Requested February 19, 1991.

Appropriation: Yes.

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

Testimony For: The foster care citizen review boards were started as pilot projects to determine whether court time and costs could be reduced and foster care case review improved. While initial evaluations are positive, additional time is required to fully demonstrate the effectiveness of citizen foster care review. The unique needs of Indian children should be addressed through the citizen foster care review process. This can be accomplished by allowing the local Indian Child Welfare Advisory Committee to perform this function for Indian children.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Marie Jack, Elsie Anderson, Mathew WarBonnet, and Lisa Powers, Snohomish County Foster Care Review Board; Audrey Feters, Lu Hitchcock, and Marion Lattomus, Yakima County Foster Care Citizen Review Board; Colleen Waterhouse Department of Social and Health Services; and Gloria Hemmen Office of the Administrator for the Courts.