

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 6428

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Human Services*

Title: An act relating to at-risk families.

Brief Description: Improving the responsiveness of services for at-risk children and families.

Sponsor(s): Senate Committee on Children & Family Services (originally sponsored by Senators Roach, Stratton and Oke; by request of Dept. of Social and Health Services, Department of Health, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Community Development and Employment Security Department.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Human Services, February 27, 1992, DPA.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
HUMAN SERVICES**

Majority Report: *Do pass as amended.* Signed by 10 members: Representatives Leonard, Chair; Riley, Vice Chair; Winsley, Ranking Minority Member; Tate, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Anderson; Brekke; Hargrove; Hochstatter; R. King; and H. Myers.

Staff: David Knutson (786-7146).

Background:

State agencies and programs have a difficult time serving children and families needing assistance from more than one service provider. Problems faced by children and families typically involve several bureaucracies which each address a distinct, categorical problem.

Children and families which face multiple problems involving schools, alcohol or drug abuse, criminal activity, abuse, neglect or family disfunction, mental illness, developmental disability, poverty, or health problems pose a dilemma for organizations which administer categorical funds and organize around specific services instead of service populations.

Summary of Amended Bill:

A family policy council composed of the superintendent of Public Instruction, the secretary of the Department of Social and Health Services, the secretary of the Department of Health, the commissioner of Employment Security, the director of the Department of Community Development, four legislators, and a representative of the governor is created.

The council will solicit funding proposals from local consortiums to address the needs of children and families whose needs are not met by the programs of a single department. The council may submit a prioritized list of projects recommended for funding in the governor's budget. The Legislature may remove projects but may not change the order of priority. Funds for consortium projects will be identified by agencies represented on the family policy council from budget requests or existing appropriations for services to children and families.

The governor may take whatever action is necessary to avoid the duplication of efforts by any other councils, commissions, or committees related to children and families.

The Juvenile Issues Task Force will prepare a study on: 1) establishing a network of local consortia that would be authorized to receive a transfer of authority and program funds for enumerated programs; 2) requiring local consortia to develop two-year plans; and 3) ways in which the local consortia could improve assistance that will strengthen the family. The task force will also assess the need to establish an institute for children and families at a college or university.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill:

The state institute for children, youth, and families is deleted. The appropriation for \$500,000 and the null and void clause are deleted.

The Juvenile Issues Task Force will study the concept of transferring responsibilities for children's programs to local consortia and determining the need for an institute for children and family services at a college or university. The substitute Senate bill gave this responsibility to the governor's council on children, youth, and families which is deleted in the House striking amendment.

The name of the family policy cabinet is changed to family policy council. The membership of the council is expanded

by adding four legislators and a representative of the governor.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Appropriation: Removed.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: This bill takes effect July 1, 1992.

Testimony For: State agencies serving children and families should be encouraged to coordinate their activities. The Family Policy Council is a positive step in this direction.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Laurie Lippold, Children's Home Society; Margaret Casey, Children's Alliance; Burton Chamberlin, Cities in School; and Bea Kelleigh, Washington Association of Community Health Centers.