

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1287

**AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES,
APRIL 4, 1991**

Brief Description: Revising provisions for adoption.

SPONSORS: House Committee on Human Services (originally sponsored by Representatives Heavey, Moyer, Franklin, Rayburn, Jones, May, Leonard, Tate, Hine, Ballard, Broback, Winsley, Wineberry, Anderson, Brekke, Miller, Riley, Kremen, Forner and Paris).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

SENATE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Roach, Chairman; L. Smith, Vice Chairman; Craswell, Stratton, and Talmadge.

Staff: Joanne Conrad (786-7190)

Hearing Dates: March 27, 1991; April 4, 1991

BACKGROUND:

In 1990, the Washington State Adoption Commission was established by the Senate Children and Family Services Committee to study and formulate recommended guidelines for minimum standards of practice for adoptions handled in Washington State.

The commission worked with the Department of Social and Health Services, the Office of Administrator for the Courts, the Washington State Adoption Council, the Washington State Bar Association, the Washington State Medical Association and others to prepare recommended statutory changes. Concerns addressed by the commission included the need for statewide uniformity and standards throughout the adoption process, adequate notice regarding the meaning of adoption, verification and revocation of adoption consent, and preplacement awareness of common adoption issues and cultural relevancy by adoptive parents.

SUMMARY:

Consent forms will contain a statement stating whether the child to be adopted is Native American or an Alaska native. Adoption facilitators will submit sworn statements documenting how they determined whether the federal Indian Child Welfare applies in each adoption. Birth parents and alleged fathers who sign consent to adoption forms must be witnessed by a person who is at least 18 years of age and selected by the

parent or alleged father. Persons preparing adoption preplacement reports must include a statement of the training or experience they have which enables them to discuss relevant adoption issues. The preplacement report must verify that adoptive parents were told of: the lifelong commitment of adoption; the adopted child's potential feelings of identity confusion and loss; ways to disclose the fact of adoption to children; possible questions from the child about birth parents and relatives; and the relevance of the child's racial, ethnic, and cultural heritage. The adopted child's medical history will be provided to adoptive parents on a standardized form developed by the Department of Social and Health Services after July 1, 1992. Adoptive parents will receive information from adoption facilitators on finding and evaluating adoption therapists. If requested, written information on adoption procedures, practices, policies, fees, and services must be provided by the adoption facilitator.

Illegally advertising children for adoption is changed from a misdemeanor to a violation of the Consumer Protection Act (Chapter 19.86 RCW).

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: available

TESTIMONY FOR:

Statutory changes, arising from work of Washington State Adoption Commission, are needed to clarify and standardize adoption practice. This bill eliminates concerns regarding qualifications of witnesses to execution of adoption consent forms.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: Representative Mike Heavey, sponsor; Jim Lyon, Washington State Adoption Council; Laurie Lippold, Children's Home Society