

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2846

**AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES,
FEBRUARY 26, 1992**

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

SPONSORS: House Committee on Human Services (originally sponsored by Representatives Leonard, Beck, Riley, Ludwig, Winsley, Wineberry, Paris, Brough, Pruitt, Franklin, Basich, Ogden, Roland, Nelson, Wood, Valle, Belcher, Brekke, Hine, Bray, H. Myers, Rasmussen, J. Kohl and Anderson; by request of Dept. of Social and Health Services, Department of Health, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Community Development and Employment Security Department)

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

SENATE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

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

Staff: Richard Rodger (786-7461)

Hearing Dates: February 25, 1992; February 26, 1992

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, each addressing a distinct, categorical problem.

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

SUMMARY:

A Family Policy Council composed of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Secretary of the Department of Social and Health Services, Secretary of the Department of Health, Commissioner of the Employment Security Department, and Director of the Department of Community Development is created.

The council shall solicit funding requests from local consortiums to address the needs of children and families whose needs are not met by the programs of a single department. Funds for consortium projects will be identified by agencies represented on the Family Policy Council for budget requests or existing appropriations for services to children and families.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: available

Effective Date: July 1, 1992

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED SENATE AMENDMENT:

The family policy council is renamed the family policy cabinet. The Governor may include other state agency representatives.

The Washington Council on Children, Youth, and Families is created within the Governor's office. The council shall have 12 voting members appointed by the Governor, six ex officio nonvoting members from the Governor's cabinet, and four nonvoting members from the Legislature.

The council shall: 1) review public and private programs, policies, and services to ensure that the goals of this act are met; 2) search for interdepartmental gaps, inconsistencies, and inefficiencies; 3) advocate for system-wide changes; 4) facilitate joint planning and coordination; 5) accept gifts, appropriations, grants, and loans; 6) disseminate information on effective programs; 7) encourage the formation of local community consortia and 8) regularly report to the Governor and the Legislature.

The Governor may take whatever action is necessary to avoid the duplication of these efforts by any other councils, commissions, or committees.

The council shall contract with a college or university to establish a state institution for children, youth and families. It will serve as a clearinghouse for information on innovations aimed at reducing events that weaken a family's ability to provide for its children. It will also provide technical assistance to consortia on issues of community protection and prevention of violence toward children, youth and families. The center will also review and analyze data collected as required in this act.

The council shall prepare a study on: 1) establishment of 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.

A \$500,000 appropriation is made and a null and void clause is added.

TESTIMONY FOR:

The executive's family policy initiative has been able to bring together the various state agencies involved in administering programs for children, youth and families. It has redirected attention to strengthening input from the local level and to reduce the number of at-risk children and families not receiving available programs. Formalizing the executive action and given additional responsibilities will help forward the coordination and decentralization of vital programs.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: Representative June Leonard, prime sponsor (pro); Barbara Bingham, Chair, Tacoma/Pierce County Commission on Children, Youth and Families (pro); Rose Stiddem, Metropolitan Development Council (pro); Peter Berlinger, Children's Alliance (pro); Laurie Lippold, Children's Home Society