

**SENATE BILL REPORT**

**SB 5025**

**AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS, FEBRUARY 19, 1991**

**Brief Description:** Providing services for at-risk youth and their families.

**SPONSORS:** Senators Craswell, Owen, Bailey, L. Smith, Roach, Stratton and Oke.

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES**

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5025 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

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

**Staff:** Jan Sharar (786-7472)

**Hearing Dates:** January 23, 1991; February 19, 1991

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS**

**Majority Report:** That Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 5025 be substituted therefor, and the second substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators McDonald, Chairman; Craswell, Vice Chairman; Bailey, Bluechel, Cantu, Hayner, Johnson, Niemi, Owen, L. Smith, West, and Wojahn.

**Staff:** Karen Hayes (786-7711)

**Hearing Dates:** March 5, 1991; March 6, 1991

**BACKGROUND:**

In 1977 the Legislature enacted the "Juvenile Justice Act" and subsequently passed the "Runaway Youth Act." The "Runaway Youth Act" was repealed in 1979 and replaced by the Procedures for Families in Conflict chapter.

Family Reconciliation Services was created under this chapter to provide services to runaways and to children in conflict with their families. These services are to be provided at the request of the family or in conjunction with an alternative residential placement (ARP) petition.

The Department of Social and Health Services, a parent or the child may file an ARP petition. If the child agrees to be placed outside of his or her home and a placement is available, the child is placed.

Crisis Residential Centers (CRCs) were also created under the Families in Conflict chapter. CRCs were intended to be short term placements for no longer than 72 hours, during which the CRC staff works with the family to avoid furthered or continued out-of-home placement.

In 1990 the Families in Conflict chapter was renamed the Family Reconciliation Act and provision of petitioning the courts on behalf of at-risk youth was added.

Many persons who work with at-risk youth and their families have identified the lack of services requested by the youth or family as a roadblock to successfully reuniting the family. Others question the viability of some of the publicly funded services, feel needed service alternatives are not available, and believe an evaluation of current programs is warranted.

**SUMMARY:**

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) is directed to evaluate and make recommendations on the family reconciliation services program. The Behavioral Sciences Institute homebuilders intensive in-home counseling program is expanded.

The Office of the Administrator of the Courts is requested to develop a curriculum on at-risk youth for superior court judges and court personnel. DSHS is directed to produce a videotape on at-risk youth for a variety of public agencies and the public.

DSHS shall establish an interdivisional at-risk youth committee to plan and coordinate all agency services to at-risk youth and their families. The committee is to make regular reports to the Senate Children and Family Services Committee and House of Representatives Human Services Committee. These legislative committees shall jointly appoint a 12-member, statewide, at-risk youth oversight committee to serve in an advisory capacity to the DSHS committee.

Parents may request involuntary treatment for a minor under the age of 18 for substance abuse but the request shall not constitute an entitlement to treatment. Within available funds, substance abuse evaluations shall be made available to minors upon a parent's request. The same provisions are made for treatment for mental illness.

DSHS shall designate 25 existing residential treatment beds for involuntary commitment of substance abusing youth. DSHS shall develop treatment protocols for these youth. DSHS shall report to the Legislature on: the number of youth using these services; the treatment protocols used; the effectiveness of voluntary and involuntary treatment; and the tracking of youth in treatment over time. DSHS is also required to track youth placed in crisis residential centers through an existing computer system. Reports to the Legislature twice a year are required.

A continuum of services pilot project is established for youth in one region to be designated by DSHS. The project shall be developed in conjunction with local government, service providers, parents and other interested persons. The project shall include: 1) family reconciliation services phase 1 and phase 2; 2) Behavioral Sciences Institute homebuilders services; 3) no more than eight family crisis residential center beds, which shall be used solely for youth referred through the Family Reconciliation Act; 4) no more than six group home and residential care beds based on need and agreement among providers that there will be a no-decline policy within the region; 5) at least two beds for secure lock-up of youth who will not stay in placement on a voluntary basis; 6) aftercare for up to 50 youth leaving CRCs and up to 20 youth leaving group or residential care; 7) a tracking system developed by DSHS for use of services within the region, etc.; and 8) a DSHS evaluation of the pilot project and a report to the Legislature by December 1, 1992.

**EFFECT OF PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE:**

Definitions for a "minor" and a "person" are incorporated into current law dealing with treatment for alcoholism, intoxication and drug addiction. Language allowing a parent to request involuntary treatment of a minor is removed. Involuntary commitment of minors for drug addiction in addition to alcoholism is provided for. Relationship of treatment needs based upon evaluation is clarified to assure minors are treated appropriately. The "no decline policy" for group care providers is removed from the pilot project requirement. Allowable use of secure lock-up use within the pilot project context is clarified. Reference to children in CRCs being removed for seriously assaultive or seriously destructive behavior is stricken and replaced with language referring to a condition in which a child who has taken unauthorized leave and the CRC cannot assure the child will not leave again. The appropriation is increased by \$300,000.

**EFFECT OF PROPOSED SECOND SUBSTITUTE:**

The appropriation of \$3,287,000 is deleted. The department is given the flexibility to designate fewer than 25 existing residential care beds, for the involuntary treatment of substance abusing youth, based on actual commitments to care by the court. Language is added which makes the proposed study as well as the expansion of family reconciliation services, homebuilders, a pilot project and the continuing education seminar for court officials all contingent upon funding in the Omnibus Appropriations Act.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** available

**Effective Date:** July 1, 1991

**TESTIMONY FOR:**

Support the efforts in provision of services to at-risk youth and their families. A secure lock-up facility is needed to hold youth so the provision of services is possible to reunite the family.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST:**

The real need is to assist families and youth within the existing structure. This will require adequate funding of the service structure already in place.

**TESTIFIED (Children & Family Services):** PRO: Stephanie Carter, WAPA; Peg Marchworth, Behavior Sciences Institute; Curt Tabaka, Karen Attaway, Carol Brigham, WPC; Lonnie Johns Brown, NASW; Rosalie McHale, Governor's Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee; Laurie Lippold, Children's Home Society; CON: Verna Pettit; Dexter and Tess Colbert

**TESTIFIED (Ways & Means):** Carol Clark, Department of Social and Health Services; PRO: Brandon Rogel, Ryther Child Center; Sheila Smith, Ruth Dykeman Center; Laurie Lippold, Children's Home Society; Stephanie Carter, WAPA