

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5179

**AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES,
FEBRUARY 27, 1991**

Brief Description: Establishing a pilot project for troubled deaf youth.

SPONSORS: Senators L. Smith, Bauer and Conner.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

Majority Report: Do pass.

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

Staff: Jan Sharar (786-7472)

Hearing Dates: February 5, 1991; February 27, 1991

BACKGROUND:

Data reported over the last 20 years to the Office of Demographic Studies of Gallaudet College in Washington D.C. indicate that between 7 and 10 percent of students between the ages of 3 and 18 who are hearing impaired have significant emotional behavioral disorders which interfere with their ongoing education. Many of these students exhibit a cluster of behaviors and learning problems which prohibit them from developing appropriate socially-affective skills within their educational program. Some of these students may also have underlying organic reasons for their behavioral or functional problems.

Although there are mainstreaming programs for hearing impaired students, minimal services are available for students classified as "emotionally disturbed hearing impaired" or "severely emotionally disturbed hearing impaired." Experts recommend that a developmental/severity model multi-dimensional program including a therapeutic unit, teacher/staff training, specially trained foster parents, family support and transition into mainstream programs is the most effective approach for treating "troubled deaf youth."

SUMMARY:

An advisory board for a pilot project for "troubled deaf youth" is established to oversee the project. Oversight shall encompass reviewing and making recommendations to the Washington State School for the Deaf in the areas of planning, implementation, and administration of the project. The project is intended to incorporate educational, psychological, and social development components to serve as a bridge for integration of the youth into existing educational programs.

The project shall initially serve 24 "troubled deaf youth." A specialized residential component will serve 12 youth and another 12 youth will be served in a specialized educational component. A state resource team will address prevention, assessment, treatment, and other resource needs statewide. The project will be located near the Washington State School for the Deaf.

Appropriation: \$1,510,000, state general fund

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: requested January 18, 1991

Effective Date: July 1, 1991

TESTIMONY FOR:

A coordinated services project as is offered in the bill is the best way to address the needs of troubled deaf youth.

TESTIMONY AGAINST:

The Washington State School for the Deaf does not want the program placed at the school.

TESTIFIED: Mike Izak, Washington Association of the Deaf; Hames F. Morris, parent; Jan Hoppler, DSHS; Fred DeBerry, chair, Washington State School for the Deaf Board