

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5653

AS PASSED SENATE, JUNE 27, 1991

Brief Description: Authorizing specialized child care and respite care for children of homeless parents.

SPONSORS: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Roach, Bailey, Stratton, Murray, Talmadge, Vognild, McMullen, Gaspard, Snyder, Wojahn, Johnson, Jesernig, Thorsness and Pelz).

SENATE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

Majority Report: 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 (786-7747)

Hearing Dates: January 29, 1991; February 26, 1991

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5653 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators McDonald, Chairman; Craswell, Vice Chairman; Bailey, Bauer, Bluechel, Cantu, Gaspard, Hayner, Johnson, L. Kreidler, Metcalf, Murray, Newhouse, Niemi, Owen, Rinehart, Saling, L. Smith, Talmadge, West, Williams, and Wojahn.

Staff: Karen Hayes (786-7711)

Hearing Dates: March 8, 1991; March 11, 1991

BACKGROUND:

Families are the fastest growing group of the homeless population. In 1989 and 1990, children represented 32 percent of the total homeless people housed by approximately 105 shelters throughout Washington. More than half of the children served are under age five. The actual number of homeless children is thought to be higher since state funded shelters record calls that were turned away. A recent study found that of the homeless preschoolers examined, 47 percent were slow in language, physical or emotional development and at least half needed further psychiatric evaluation. It is believed that child care services for homeless children will improve their physical, social, emotional and cognitive functioning and therefore prevent later educational and social failures.

SUMMARY:

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) is directed to contract with eligible providers for specialized child care and respite care for children of homeless parents. A minimum of \$25,000 per fiscal year is allocated to providers in any county that had at least 100 children under the age of five served in emergency shelters the preceding year. If a county had less than 100 children under the age of five served in emergency shelters the preceding year, the minimum allocation is \$10,000. Providers are required to demonstrate that licensed child care and respite child care are available services for children under the age of six. Providers of respite child care are required to submit background checks through the State Patrol. Homeless parents of children are afforded an appropriate place to leave their children while seeking or maintaining employment, attending treatment, searching for housing or needing respite.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: available

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

TESTIMONY FOR:

Allows homeless families to seek available assistance, apply for work, find housing and helps children deal with the stresses of homelessness. Children also benefit from increased safety during the day and child abuse is reduced by relieving some of the parents' stress.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED (Children & Family Services): PRO: Cheri McCoubrey, Morning Song Center; Betty Griggs, Kitsap Community Action Agency; Judy Cliborn, Human Services Roundtable; Mike McCormick, Volunteers of America; Michelle Powers, Housing Hope; Jim Justin, Assoc. of WA Cities; Lonnie Johns-Brown, Child Care Works for Washington; Donna Schaffe; Karen Tvedt, DSHS (neutral)

TESTIFIED (Ways & Means): PRO: Senator Pam Roach, prime sponsor; Margaret Casey, Child Care for Washington Works, Children's Budget Coalition, WSCC; Kathleen Coyle, Our Place Daycare Center