

**SENATE BILL REPORT**

**SSB 5748**

**AS PASSED SENATE, MARCH 14, 1991**

**Brief Description:** Requiring the department of social and health services to develop a coordinated policy for long-term care of children with special needs.

**SPONSORS:** Senate Committee on Children & Family Services (originally sponsored by Senator Roach).

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES**

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5748 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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

**Staff:** Jan Sharar (786-7747)

**Hearing Dates:** February 20, 1991; February 26, 1991

**BACKGROUND:**

Current residential options for special needs children, children who need skilled health care intervention and monitoring due to physical or developmental disabilities or illness, are limited. Children infected with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), drug affected children, etc. are currently limited to hospitals, nursing homes, and specialized foster care for residential care. Families of these children currently receive limited support for the care of their children within their homes as well.

No minimum standards and guidelines exist for program options for special needs children outside of the options mentioned. At least two programs are operating under a temporary "special group home" state license category.

**SUMMARY:**

Duties of the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and the purpose of agencies created for the care of children, expectant mothers, and the developmentally disabled are amended to include creation of an array of residential and family support services for special needs children.

Special needs children are defined as individuals up to the age of 22 who have physical or developmental disabilities or developmental delays and illnesses that require skilled health care intervention and monitoring.

DSHS is required to establish a children's long term care policy incorporating a continuum of family support options.

Residential care options and services are enumerated. DSHS and the Department of Health are to establish minimum standards to guide the selection of facilities and agencies authorized to establish residential care options. The Legislative Budget Committee (LBC) shall report to the Legislature on the development of this agreement and a children's long term care policy and provide oversight.

LBC is also directed to conduct an independent evaluation of residential options for medically fragile children, including cost comparisons and report to the appropriate legislative committees by December 1, 1991.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** available

**TESTIMONY FOR:**

This bill addresses a long recognized need for a continuum of services for special needs children and their families.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST:** None

**TESTIFIED:** PRO: Margaret Casey, Washington State Catholic Conference; Colleen Waterhouse, Acting Director DCFS/DSHS; Sharon Hansen, Dev. Disabilities Planning Council