

**SENATE BILL REPORT**

**SB 6260**

**AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS, FEBRUARY 11, 1992**

**Brief Description:** Including fetal alcohol syndrome and fetal alcohol effect in the definition of developmental disability.

**SPONSORS:** Senators Roach and Erwin

**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; Stratton, and Talmadge.

**Staff:** Mich'l Prentice Needham (786-7439)

**Hearing Dates:** February 3, 1992; February 7, 1992

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS**

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6260 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators McDonald, Chairman; Craswell, Vice Chairman; Bauer, Bluechel, Gaspard, M. Kreidler, Murray, Newhouse, Niemi, Rinehart, L. Smith, Talmadge, West, Williams, and Wojahn.

**Staff:** Tim Yowell (786-7715)

**Hearing Dates:** February 11, 1992

**BACKGROUND:**

The definition of developmental disability includes disabilities attributable to mental retardation, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, autism, or another neurological condition similar to mental retardation. Disabilities must originate before age 18, be expected to continue indefinitely, and constitute a substantial handicap for the individual.

Many experts have indicated that prenatal alcohol exposure puts children at biological risk. Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) is a medically diagnosed birth defect caused by prenatal alcohol exposure. Characteristics of FAS include brain damage, behavioral and learning problems, growth deficiencies, physical malformations, and central nervous system disorders. Fetal Alcohol Effect (FAE) is a less severe version of FAS and exhibits milder characteristics of FAS.

Children with disabilities related to FAS and FAE are currently classified as developmentally disabled only if they meet the functional definition of mental retardation.

**SUMMARY:**

Disabilities attributable to Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) and Fetal Alcohol Effect (FAE) are included in the definition of developmental disability.

**EFFECT OF PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE:**

Passage is made contingent upon funds being included in the supplemental appropriations act.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** available

**TESTIMONY FOR (Children & Family Services):**

Including FAS and FAE in the definition of developmental disability will create a categorical definition for children with FAS and FAE instead of just the functional (IQ) test that is used now, and more children will be eligible for services.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST (Children & Family Services):** None

**TESTIFIED (Children & Family Services):** PRO: Jocie DeVries, FAS Adolescent Task Force; Roberta Wright, FAS/FAE Parent Support Group; Victoria McKinney, FAS Task Force; Linda Belle LaFever, FAS Task Force; Jean Haas, FAS Task Force, Sara Brown, FAS Adolescent Task Force; Sandra Randels, Department of Health; Sue Elliot, Department of Social and Health Services

**TESTIMONY FOR (Ways & Means):**

The public is already paying for FAS/FAE through increased costs for law enforcement, incarceration, psychiatric hospitalizations, and dysfunctional families. Supporters are asking that the money be spent differently, on group care beds, and on parent and professional training.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST (Ways & Means):** None

**TESTIFIED (Ways & Means):** PRO: Jocie DeVries, Victoria McKinney, Linda Belle LaFever