

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6428

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES,  
FEBRUARY 7, 1992

**Brief Description:** Improving the responsiveness of services for at-risk children and families.

**SPONSORS:** Senators Roach, Stratton and Oke; by request of Dept. of Social and Health Services, Department of Health, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Community Development and Employment Security Department

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES**

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6428 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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

**Staff:** Richard Rodger (786-7461)

**Hearing Dates:** February 5, 1992; February 7, 1992

**BACKGROUND:**

State agencies and programs have a difficult time serving children and families needing assistance from more than one service provider. Problems faced by children and families typically involve several bureaucracies which each address a distinct, categorical problem.

Children and families which face multiple problems involving schools, alcohol or drug abuse, criminal activity, abuse, neglect or family disfunction, mental illness, developmental disability, poverty, or health problems pose a dilemma for organizations which administer categorical funds and organize around specific services instead of service populations.

**SUMMARY:**

A family policy council composed of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Secretary of the Department of Social and Health Services, the Secretary of the Department of Health, the Commissioner of Employment Security, and the Director of the Department of Community Development is created.

The council shall solicit funding proposals from local consortiums to address the needs of children and families whose needs are not met by the programs of a single department. The council may submit a prioritized list of projects recommended for funding in the Governor's budget. The Legislature may remove projects but may not change the

order of priority. Funds for consortium projects will be identified by agencies represented on the family policy council from budget requests or existing appropriations for services to children and families.

**EFFECT OF PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE:**

The family policy council is renamed the family policy cabinet. The Governor may include other state agency representatives.

The Washington Council on Children, Youth, and Families is created within the Governor's office. The council shall have 12 voting members appointed by the Governor, six ex officio nonvoting members from the Governor's cabinet, and four nonvoting members from the Legislature.

The council shall: 1) review public and private programs, policies, and services to ensure that the goals of this act are met; 2) search for interdepartmental gaps, inconsistencies, and inefficiencies; 3) advocate for system-wide changes; 4) facilitate joint planning and coordination; 5) accept gifts, appropriations, grants, and loans; 6) disseminate information on effective programs; 7) encourage the formation of local community consortia and 8) regularly report to the Governor and the Legislature.

The Governor may take whatever action is necessary to avoid the duplication of these efforts by any other councils, commissions, or committees.

The council shall contract with a college or university to establish a state institution for children, youth and families. It will serve as a clearinghouse for information on innovations aimed at reducing events that weaken a family's ability to provide for its children. It will also provide technical assistance to consortia on issues of community protection and prevention of violence toward children, youth and families. The center will also review and analyze data collected as required in this act.

The council shall prepare a study on: 1) establishment of a network of local consortia that would be authorized to receive a transfer of authority and program funds for enumerated programs; 2) requiring local consortia to develop two-year plans; and 3) ways in which the local consortia could improve assistance that will strengthen the family.

A null and void clause is added.

**Appropriation:** \$500,000

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** requested February 5, 1992

**Effective Date:** July 1, 1992

**TESTIMONY FOR:**

The executive's family policy initiative has been able to bring together the various state agencies involved in administering programs for children, youth and families. It has redirected attention to strengthening input from the local level and to reduce the number of at-risk children and families not receiving available programs. Formalizing the executive action and given additional responsibilities will help forward the coordination and decentralization of vital programs.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST:** None

**TESTIFIED:** PRO: Barbara Gooding, Department of Community Development; Steve Rogers, Port Angeles Schools; Gay Knutson, Clallam County Youth 2000; Judith Billings, Superintendent of Public Instruction; Dick Thompson, Director, Department of Social and Health Services; Vernon Stoner, ESD; Dr. Mimi Fields, DOH; Peter Berliner, The Children's Alliance; Laurie Lippold, Children's Home Society; Linda Thompson, Cities In Schools