

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1233

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Children & Family Services & Corrections, March 31, 2003

Title: An act relating to improving services for kinship caregivers.

Brief Description: Improving services for kinship caregivers.

Sponsors: House Committee on Children & Family Services (originally sponsored by Representatives Pettigrew, Boldt, Moeller, Kagi, Lovick, Orcutt, Dickerson, Chase, Darneille, Eickmeyer, O'Brien, Roach, Armstrong, Flannigan, Jarrett, Clibborn, Lantz, Kenney, Benson, Shabro, Nixon, Morrell, Mielke and Haigh).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Children & Family Services & Corrections: 3/21/03, 3/31/03 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Stevens, Chair; Parlette, Vice Chair; Carlson, Deccio, Hargrove, McAuliffe and Regala.

Staff: Tony Rugel (786-7754)

Background: A Task Force For Kinship Care was convened and met in the summer and fall of 2002. The task force reviewed various options and concerns regarding kinship care. One recommendation was for the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to expand efforts to locate kin for children in need of services. Another recommendation was for the state to adopt a Caregiver's Authorization Affidavit which would authorize relative caregivers to enroll a child in school and obtain medical care for the child. In addition, the task force concluded that special efforts should be taken to assist kin in their interaction with DSHS when providing services to children.

Summary of Amended Bill: DSHS must implement strategies to increase the number of children placed with willing and able relatives when out-of-home placement is required. At a minimum, DSHS must:

- develop a standardized, statewide protocol to be used for relative search activities; and
- develop a policy for conducting active outreach efforts to identify and locate relatives during initial and ongoing searches.

DSHS must collaborate with one or more nonprofit community-based agencies to develop a grant proposal to establish a minimum of two kinship care navigator pilot projects, to assist kinship caregivers with understanding and navigating the system of services for children in out-of-home care.

DSHS must establish an oversight committee to monitor, guide, and report on kinship care recommendations and implementation activities.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: All references to the kinship caregiver's affidavit are eliminated.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: General support was given to the concept of the bill with specific support given for the search aspects of the bill.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Jerri Pauth, private citizen; Laverne Lamoureux, DSHS; Marie Jamieson, Families for Kids Partnership; Donna Christensen, WA. St. Catholic Conference; Larry Pederson, Oly. Family Support Center; Kristie Lund, Kinship Caregiver Relatives As Parents; Laurie Lippold, Children's Home Society.