

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 2765

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Children & Family Services & Corrections, February 26, 2004

Title: An act relating to information and services for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Brief Description: Establishing an advisory council on early interventions for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Sponsors: Representatives Dickerson, Kagi, McDermott, Moeller, Talcott, Chase, Conway, Kenney and Morrell.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Children & Family Services & Corrections: 2/24/04, 2/26/04 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

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

Staff: Edith Rice (786-7444)

Background: As part of the House Children and Family Services Committee's 2003 interim plan, the committee assembled a Work Group on Deaf Education in Washington to consider the respective roles of, and the relationships among, the Washington School for the Deaf, local school districts, educational service districts, community services, and community resources in the delivery of effective education to hearing impaired children throughout the state, as well as the appropriate service delivery models for those children.

The work group held three meetings over the course of the interim at which a range of issues and topics were discussed.

At the final meeting of the work group, the members of the work group developed consensus statements, which reflect the basic principles agreed upon by all of the members of the work group, and goals and policy recommendations, which are based upon those consensus statements. The goals of the work group included ensuring that appropriate early intervention services for children who are deaf or hard of hearing, spanning the spectrum of communication and educational options, are provided throughout the state, with the corresponding policy recommendation that statewide standards be developed by an advisory council for early intervention services and early intervention services providers specifically for children who are deaf or hard of hearing. The goals also included providing appropriate and timely counseling and information for parents of children who are deaf or hard of hearing throughout the state, with the corresponding policy recommendation that a pamphlet be created by an advisory council to be provided to parents by their children's pediatricians or audiologists upon diagnosis of hearing loss. This policy recommendation specified that the pamphlet should contain information on the variety of interventions and treatments available

for children who are deaf or hard of hearing, as well as resources for parent support, counseling, financing, and education.

Summary of Amended Bill: The Department of Social and Health Services must establish an advisory council for the purpose of advancing the development of a statewide system to provide early interventions for children in the state who are deaf or hard of hearing and their families.

Members of the advisory council must have training, experience, or interest in hearing loss in children. Membership must include, but not be limited to, the following: pediatricians; audiologists; teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing; parents of children who are deaf or hard of hearing; and representatives of the Infant Toddler Early Intervention Program, the Department of Health, and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

By January 1, 2005, the advisory council is required to develop statewide standards for early intervention services and early intervention services providers specifically related to children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

The advisory council is required to create a pamphlet to be provided to the parents of a child in the state who is diagnosed with hearing loss. The pamphlet must be available for distribution by July 1, 2005.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: A representative from the Washington School for the Deaf is added to the advisory council.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Infants are not typically tested for hearing loss at birth, but the earlier hearing problems can be identified, the more options there are for treatment and education.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Doug Baker, Washington State University; Larry Swift, Washington School for the Deaf, Bd. of Trustees; George Olson, Washington School for the Deaf.