

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2984

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

Title: An act relating to child fatality reviews for children involved in the child welfare system.

Brief Description: Requiring child fatality reviews for children involved in the child welfare system.

Sponsors: House Committee on Children & Family Services (originally sponsored by Representatives Shabro, Kagi, Bush, Darneille, Dickerson, Roach, Rodne, Bailey, Boldt, Campbell, Nixon, McDonald, Kenney, Armstrong, Woods, Chase and Hunter).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Children & Family Services & Corrections: 2/18/04, 2/26/04 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

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

Staff: Edith Rice (786-7444)

Background: The Children's Administration (CA) of the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) conducts internal child fatality reviews when any of the following criteria are met with reference to the death of a child:

- The child's family had an open case with CA at the time of death;
- The child's family received any services from the CA within the 12 months preceding the death, including a referral for services that did not result in an open case; or
- The death occurred in a home or facility licensed to care for children.

The purpose of the CA's child fatality review process is to conduct an examination of the handling of a case to determine whether or not agency policies, procedures, and practices were properly followed.

Summary of Bill: DSHS must conduct a child fatality review in the event of an unexpected death of a minor in the state who is in the care of, or receiving child welfare services from, DSHS or has been in care of, or receiving child welfare services from, DSHS within one year preceding the death.

Upon conclusion of the child fatality review, DSHS must issue a report on the results of the review to the appropriate committees of the Legislature and to make copies of the report available to the public upon request.

DSHS must develop and implement procedures to carry out the requirements of the bill.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Although the Department of Social and Health Services already does child fatality reviews, there is no statutory requirement for it to do so. It is important that there be a mandate and standards provided in order to continue these reviews and ensure they are meaningful.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Shabro, sponsor; Art Cantrall, Department of Social and Health Services.