

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6457

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Children & Family Services & Corrections, February 4, 2004

Title: An act relating to adoption.

Brief Description: Changing provisions relating to adoption.

Sponsors: Senators Swecker, Stevens, Deccio, Prentice, Parlette, Hargrove, Jacobsen, Kohl-Welles and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Children & Family Services & Corrections: 1/27/04, 2/4/04 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6457 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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

Staff: Edith Rice (786-7444)

Background: Fees related to the adoption of a child vary greatly and can exceed the financial reach of families whose resources are limited. Concerns have been raised that families willing to adopt have been discouraged or prevented from doing so because of the prohibitive fees.

Summary of Substitute Bill: A legislative study panel is created to study and report findings regarding adoption-related fees, barriers to adoption, child selling and buying, marketing, discrimination and agency licensing. A report to the Legislature is due by January 1, 2005.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: A legislative study panel is created to look at issues around adoption with a report due January 1, 2005.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Our goal should be to place children in adoptive homes at no cost. We should set a new standard for adoptions. Children are a serious money business; adoption is discriminatory and bad for children under the current system.

Testimony Against: Concerns: Sliding fee scales encourage low income families to adopt. Families need this flexibility. Issues should be discussed in greater depth. Differing types of

adoption situations warrant different approaches. Fees should be looked at. Best interests of the child should be the focus.

Testified: Senator Dan Swecker, sponsor (pro); Pastor Ken Hutcherson (pro); Anne Taylor, Medina Children's Services (concerns); Donna Christensen, Washington State Catholic Conference (concerns); Laurie Lippold, Children's Home Society (concerns); Laverne Lamoureux, Director, Program and Policy, Children's Administration (concerns).