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HOUSE BILL 1981

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State of Washington

58th Legislature

2003 Regular Session

By Representative Dickerson

Read first time 02/18/2003. Referred to Committee on Children & Family Services.

1 AN ACT Relating to establishing the joint task force on child death  
2 investigations; and creating new sections.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that it is of utmost  
5 importance to assure adequate investigation and reporting of child  
6 deaths. The legislature finds that Washington does not have uniformity  
7 among the counties in the use of coroners or medical examiners. The  
8 lack of uniformity may lead to under-investigation of child deaths in  
9 this state.

10 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The joint task force on child death  
11 investigations is established. The joint task force shall consist of  
12 eight members, as follows:

13 (a) Four members from the house of representatives who shall be  
14 appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives. Two members  
15 of the joint task force shall be members of the house of  
16 representatives children and family services committee and two members  
17 of the joint task force shall be members of the house of

1 representatives health care committee. Each of the two largest  
2 caucuses shall be represented on the joint task force;

3 (b) Four members from the senate who shall be appointed by the  
4 president of the senate. Two members of the joint task force shall be  
5 members of the senate children and family services and corrections  
6 committee and two members of the joint task force shall be members of  
7 the senate health and long-term care committee. Each of the two  
8 largest caucuses of the senate shall be represented on the joint task  
9 force.

10 (2) The joint task force shall choose its cochairs from among its  
11 membership.

12 (3) The cochairs of the joint task force shall appoint an advisory  
13 committee of nonvoting advisors and experts to provide input on various  
14 subjects. For purposes of this subsection, "advisors and experts" may  
15 include, but are not limited to, representatives of: Counties,  
16 coroners, medical examiners, members of the child death review team,  
17 local health officials, and state agencies.

18 (4) The joint task force shall review the following issues:

19 (a) Whether Washington should replace the current county coroner  
20 system with a state medical examiner system.

21 (b) Whether there is a need to implement statewide rules to ensure  
22 uniformity in child death investigations.

23 (c) Whether the protocols required under RCW 43.103.100 are being  
24 followed uniformly in Washington.

25 (d) Whether coroners are being reimbursed for the costs of  
26 autopsies of children under the age of three as provided for in RCW  
27 68.50.104.

28 (e) Any other issues which the joint task force deems relevant to  
29 the intent of this act.

30 (5) The joint task force shall report its findings and  
31 recommendations to the legislature no later than December 1, 2003.

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