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HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 4012

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State of Washington

58th Legislature

2003 Regular Session

By Representatives Miloscia, Delvin, Dickerson, Boldt, Chase, Moeller, Edwards, Haigh, Pettigrew, Benson, Voloria, Kagi and Schual-Berke

Read first time 02/10/2003. Referred to Committee on Children & Family Services.

1 TO THE HONORABLE LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITIES OF THE COUNTIES AND LOCAL  
2 GOVERNMENTS OF WASHINGTON STATE:

3 We, your Memorialists, the Senate and House of Representatives of  
4 the State of Washington, in legislative session assembled, respectfully  
5 represent and petition as follows:

6 WHEREAS, The effect of child sexual abuse on victims is devastating  
7 and the subsequent investigation, prosecution, and advocacy involving  
8 child victims should be implemented in a manner so as to not further  
9 traumatize victims;

10 WHEREAS, State guidelines and protocols have been established  
11 pursuant to chapter 389, Laws of 1999 (Senate Bill No. 5127); and

12 WHEREAS, Children's Advocacy Centers are a multidisciplinary  
13 private-public partnership designed to improve outcomes for child  
14 victims of sexual abuse; and

15 WHEREAS, The purposes of Children's Advocacy Centers are to:

16 (1) Develop, achieve, and maintain interagency and  
17 interprofessional cooperation and coordination in the investigation,  
18 treatment, and prosecution of intrafamilial and extrafamilial child  
19 sexual abuse cases;

1 (2) Obtain evidence useful for both criminal prosecution as well as  
2 protection action in civil proceedings;

3 (3) Reduce to the absolute minimum the number of interviews of  
4 child sexual abuse victims so as to minimize revictimization of the  
5 child;

6 (4) Coordinate the medical and therapeutic treatment program for  
7 child sexual abuse victims and their nonoffending family members;

8 (5) Provide for a multidisciplinary team and case management  
9 approach which is focused first on the alleged or suspected child  
10 sexual abuse victim's needs and conditions, second on the family  
11 members who are supportive of the child and whose interests are  
12 consistent with the best interests of the child, and third on law  
13 enforcement and prosecutorial needs;

14 (6) Provide for training and continued education of skilled  
15 professional interviewers and investigators of child sexual abuse  
16 victims; and

17 (7) Serve as a focus of information and referral for child sexual  
18 abuse; and

19 WHEREAS, In recognition that child abuse is a complex problem,  
20 Children's Advocacy Centers may also investigate cases involving other  
21 forms of child abuse and neglect;

22 NOW, THEREFORE, Your Memorialists respectfully encourage counties  
23 and local governments to establish and administer a Children's Advocacy  
24 Center which is a member of the National Children's Alliance to improve  
25 outcomes for child victims of sexual abuse;

26 BE IT RESOLVED, That copies of this Memorial be immediately  
27 transmitted to the legislative authorities of the counties and local  
28 governments of Washington State.

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