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**Children & Family Services  
Committee**

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**ESSB 5872**

**Brief Description:** Creating a task force on the administrative organization, structure, and delivery of services to children and families.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections (originally sponsored by Senators Stevens, Carrell, Mulliken, Deccio, Finkbeiner, Delvin, Benson, Johnson, Oke, Hewitt and Schmidt).

**Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill**

- Creates a task force on the administrative organization, structure, and delivery of services to children and families to determine the most appropriate and effective administrative structure for delivery of those services.

**Hearing Date:** March 28, 2005.

**Staff:** Cynthia Forland (786-7152).

**Background:**

In the early 1970s, the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) was created as an umbrella agency to bring together state human services programs so that people could get comprehensive assistance with many, often interrelated, needs and the state could realize savings through lower administrative costs.

The DSHS is made up of the following six administrations:

- The Aging and Disability Services Administration (ADSA) provides care to low-income individuals who require assistance in order to live independently in their homes and to individuals who receive care in adult family homes, boarding homes, or nursing homes. The ADSA includes the Division of Development Disabilities, which assists individuals with developmental disabilities and their families to obtain services and supports.
- The Children's Administration (CA) administers child welfare and licensing services, which include the investigation of child abuse and neglect complaints, child protection, family preservation, family reconciliation, foster care, group care, in-home services, independent living, and adoption services for children from 0 to 18 years of age.
- The Economic Services Administration provides assistance to individuals and families in need, which includes cash and food assistance, child support services, child care, and work-focused services designed to help people obtain, maintain, and improve employment.

- The Health and Rehabilitative Services Administration serves individuals who have physical or mental disabilities, mental illnesses, or addictions to drugs or alcohol.
- The Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration (JRA) provides juvenile offenders with rehabilitation, and offers programs to help them transition back to the community.
- The Medical Assistance Administration manages health care programs for low-income individuals, including the Medicaid program.

**Summary of Bill:**

A task force on the administrative organization, structure, and delivery of services to children and families is created to determine the most appropriate and effective administrative structure for delivery of social and health services to children and families, including juvenile rehabilitation services.

The task force is required to study how best to ensure that an administration has defined lines of responsibility for delivering services to children and families in need and the best means for the public to hold government accountable for delivery of those services. The task force is also required to compare the effectiveness of including delivery of services to children and families within an umbrella agency, such as the current DSHS, with establishing a separate department for services to children and families whose director reports directly to the Governor and is not under the administration of an umbrella agency. As part of that comparison, the task force is required to examine the administrative structures used in other states for the delivery of services to children and families.

The task force is to consist of the following members, appointed by the Governor:

- the Dean of the School of Social Work at the University of Washington or an academic professor from a list recommended by the Dean;
- two members of the Senate, from names recommended by the Chair of the Senate Human Services and Corrections Committee, which must include one member from the minority party;
- two members of the House of Representatives, from names recommended by the Chair of the House Children and Family Services Committee, which must include one member from the minority party;
- an academic professor with expertise in the management of public agencies, from a list of names recommended by the Dean of the Daniel J. Evans School of Public Affairs at the University of Washington;
- a juvenile court administrator, from a list of names recommended by the Washington Association of Juvenile Court Administrators;
- a family superior court judge, from a list of names recommended by the Superior Court Judges Association;
- a law enforcement officer with experience in working with Child Protective Services investigations, from a list of names recommended by the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs;
- the Director of the Washington State Office of Public Defense;
- the Director of the Office of the Family and Children's Ombudsman;
- a line worker from the JRA's Division of Community Programs, from a list of names recommended by the Washington Federation of State Employees;

- a line social worker from the DSHS with a master's degree in social work and 15 years' experience in the public or private sector investigating child abuse or neglect and referring families and children to alcohol and substance abuse services, from a list of names recommended by the Washington Federation of State Employees;
- a private vendor of mental health services to children and families with children in both in-home and out-of-home placements as a result of abuse or neglect or for juvenile rehabilitation, from a list of names recommended by the Washington State Coalition of Children's Residential Services;
- the Director of CA's Office of Legislative Affairs; and
- a representative of the Governor's Office.

The Dean of the School of Social Work at the University of Washington or the academic professor appointed by the Governor is to be the chair of the task force.

The task force is required to study and report findings and recommendations on which administrative and service delivery structures will best accomplish positive outcomes for children and families and efficiencies in administration, including, but not limited to:

- reducing the number of children at risk for abuse or neglect and increasing the safety and well-being of children;
- increasing the ability of families to care for their own children and reducing the number of children in foster care;
- increasing placement stability and permanency for children in out-of-home care and reducing unsafe and inappropriate placements;
- delivering appropriate and timely mental health services;
- providing adequate and appropriate staff training and education;
- promoting foster parent recruitment, training, and retention;
- reducing the frequency and duration of sibling separation;
- delivering adequate and timely services to adolescents;
- increasing responsibility and accountability for achieving goals; and
- improving any other measurable outcomes for children and families.

The task force is required to study and report findings and recommendations on the costs, benefits, savings, or reductions in services of the various administrative and service delivery structures considered.

The first meeting of the task force must be no later than May 1, 2005, with subsequent meetings as needed. The task force may consult with others as is needed. The final report of the findings and recommendations must be provided to appropriate committees of the Legislature by December 1, 2005.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on March 15, 2005.

**Effective Date:** The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.