

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESSB 5872

As Passed House - Amended:

April 7, 2005

Title: An act relating to creating the joint task force on the administration and delivery of services to children and families.

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

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

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Children & Family Services: 3/28/05, 3/31/05 [DPA];

Appropriations: 4/2/05 [DPA(APPw/oCFS)s].

Floor Activity:

Passed House - Amended: 4/7/05, 96-0.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill (As Amended by House)

- Creates a joint task force to determine the most appropriate and effective administrative structure for delivery of social and health services to children and families.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Kagi, Chair; Roberts, Vice Chair; Hinkle, Ranking Minority Member; Walsh, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Darneille, Dickerson, Dunn, Haler and Pettigrew.

Staff: Cynthia Forland (786-7152).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended by Committee on Appropriations and without amendment by Committee on Children and Family Services. Signed by 28 members: Representatives Sommers, Chair; Fromhold, Vice Chair; Alexander, Ranking Minority

Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; McDonald, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bailey, Buri, Clements, Cody, Conway, Darneille, Dunshee, Grant, Haigh, Hinkle, Hunter, Kagi, Kenney, Kessler, Linville, McDermott, McIntire, Miloscia, Pearson, Priest, Schual-Berke, Talcott and Walsh.

Staff: Amy Skei (786-7140).

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 Developmental 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 Amended Bill:

A joint task force is created to determine the most appropriate and effective administrative structure for delivery of social and health services to the children and families of the state.

The joint task force is required to study how best to ensure that an administrative structure 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 joint task force is also required to compare the effectiveness of: including social and health services to children and families within an umbrella agency, such as the current DSHS; establishing a separate agency for social and health services to children and families whose

administrator reports directly to the Governor; or creating a children and family services cabinet reporting directly to the Governor. As part of the comparison, the joint task force is required to examine the administrative structures used in other states to deliver social and health services to children and families.

Membership of the joint task force is to consist of the following:

- the Dean of the School of Social Work at the University of Washington or an academic professor from a list recommended by the Dean, jointly appointed by the Chairs of the House Children and Family Services Committee and the Senate Human Services and Corrections Committee;
- two members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, one of whom must be a member of the majority caucus and one of whom must be a member of the minority caucus, and two members of the Senate appointed by the President of the Senate, one of whom must be a member of the majority caucus and one of whom must be a member of the minority caucus;
- the Secretary of the DSHS or the Secretary's designee;
- the Director of the Office of the Family and Children's Ombudsman; and
- the following, jointly appointed by the Chairs of the House Children and Family Services Committee and the Senate Human Services and Corrections Committee:
 - an individual with previous experience as an administrator of a public agency providing services to children and families;
 - a juvenile court administrator;
 - a family superior court judge;
 - a social worker with experience in the public sector serving children and families; and
 - two representatives of community-based providers serving children and families.

The Dean of the School of Social Work at the University of Washington or the academic professor appointed from a list recommended by the Dean is to be the chair of the joint task force.

The joint task force is required to make recommendations concerning which administrative structure or structures would best realize efficiencies in administration and best achieve positive outcomes for children and families, including, but not limited to, the following:

- 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; and
- increasing responsibility and accountability for achieving goals.

The joint task force is also required to make recommendations concerning the costs, benefits, savings, or reductions in services associated with the various administrative structures considered by the joint task force.

Staff support for the joint task force is to be provided by the House of Representatives Office of Program Research and Senate Committee Services.

Legislative members of the joint task force are to be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with state law. Nonlegislative members, except those representing an employer or organization, are entitled to be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with state law.

The joint task force is required to report its recommendations to the Governor and the appropriate committees of the Legislature by December 1, 2005.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: (Children & Family Services) (In support) This bill is somewhat controversial in the fact that it is changing the status quo. Too many children in the custody of the state have died. It continues to be an ongoing problem of repeating same mistakes. The number one concern is keeping children safe. By dividing the CA away from the DSHS, it would place a greater emphasis on the safety of children by making the administrator of that agency a cabinet-level position. It is possible that the CA is being lost in the overall big organization of the DSHS. Breaking apart a state agency is a complicated process, but we need to closer look at the advisability of dividing the CA out. It seems appropriate that the School of Social Work should take the lead in this process. Given the connections between child welfare and juvenile justice, it seems only logical to also include the JRA in these considerations. Overall, there is a lot to look at here.

(With amendments) In looking at breaking apart any section of the DSHS, it would be good to know or have a better sense of what outcomes you hope to achieve with the new configuration. You have to look at what a children's department should be, what it should include. The idea of having a task force take a look at this is the best approach. The make-up of the task force should be a bit different, including people from community-based organizations and an outside expert in child welfare.

Testimony For: (Appropriations) We are in support of examining and improving the structure used to deliver services to children and families and would like to be involved in any such efforts.

Testimony Against: (Children & Family Services) Increasing the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families in the state is a shared goal. Increasing accountability, particularly to the public, is also a shared goal. The DSHS anticipates many changes in the

future, particularly in children's services. The bill should be held off while the DSHS undertakes changes.

Testimony Against: (Appropriations) None.

Persons Testifying: (Children & Family Services) (In support) Senator Stevens, prime sponsor.

(With amendments) Laurie Lippold, Children's Home Society.

(Opposed) Robin Arnold-Williams, Department of Social and Health Services.

Persons Testifying: (Appropriations) Laurie Lippold, Children's Home Society.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: (Children & Family Services) None.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: (Appropriations) None.