

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1426

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Human Services & Corrections, March 31, 2005

Title: An act relating to children of incarcerated parents.

Brief Description: Establishing an interagency plan for children of incarcerated parents.

Sponsors: House Committee on Children & Family Services (originally sponsored by Representatives Roberts, McDonald, Kagi, Nixon, Pettigrew, Dickerson, Darneille, Tom, Rodne, Hasegawa, O'Brien, Lovick, Ormsby, Morrell, Chase and Santos).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/28/05, 89-0.

Committee Activity: Human Services & Corrections: 3/21/05, 3/31/05 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Hargrove, Chair; Regala, Vice Chair; Stevens, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Carrell, McAuliffe and Thibaudeau.

Staff: Edith Rice (786-7444)

Background: Children of incarcerated parents face a variety of obstacles directly related to their parents incarceration. Unstable living situations, financial hardship, and social stigma all contribute to the likelihood that these children will experience difficulty in school, be at greater risk for substance abuse, and may engage in criminal activity themselves.

Summary of Amended Bill: The Department of Corrections (DOC) will partner with the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to develop an interagency plan to provide services for children of incarcerated individuals. The plan will identify existing state services, methods to improve collaboration among programs, and new services needed. The plan will address areas for further research to support long term services to this population.

DOC and DSHS will form an oversight committee to develop this interagency plan. The oversight committee will include members with decision-making authority from the following organizations: DOC; DSHS; Children's Administration; Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration; Washington Association of Sheriff's and Police Chiefs; the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; courts; prosecutors; public defenders; and community agencies and caregivers. The oversight committee will also seek input from children of incarcerated parents and incarcerated parents. The plan will be developed by June 30, 2006 and an interim report is due to the appropriate committees of the legislature by January 1, 2006.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: The Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs replaces the reference to law enforcement and jails for membership on the oversight committee.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Testimony For: Children of incarcerated parents are at greater risk of entering the criminal justice system because of increased exposure to criminal behavior. It is important to note that the House amended this bill to allow for input to the committee from children of incarcerated parents as well as input from parents who have been incarcerated.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Representative Mary Helen Roberts, prime sponsor.