

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6068

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As of January 22, 2024

**Title:** An act relating to reporting on dependency outcomes.

**Brief Description:** Reporting on dependency outcomes.

**Sponsors:** Senators Boehnke and Wilson, C..

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Human Services: 1/22/24.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Revises the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) annual dependency outcome reporting requirements.
- Directs the AOC, in consultation with other agencies and entities with relevant data or expertise, to identify measures of relational permanency and child well-being and report its findings to the Legislature by July 1, 2025, subject to appropriations.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

**Staff:** Alison Mendiola (786-7488)

**Background:** The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), in consultation with the Attorney General's Office and the Department of Children, Youth and Families, is directed by statute to compile an annual report providing information about cases that fail to meet statutory guidelines to achieve permanency for dependent children. This report is submitted to the Legislature and a representative of the Foster Parent Association of Washington State on December 1st of each year.

The annual report also includes information about:

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- whether foster parents received timely notification of dependency hearings as required by statute; and
- whether caregivers submitted reports to the court.

The AOC develops standard court forms for mandatory use by parties in dependency matters. The AOC provides these forms to all county court clerks.

**Summary of Bill:** The bill as referred to committee not considered.

**Summary of Bill (Proposed Substitute):** AOC's annual dependency report is to include information about dependency cases including available data about whether children in Washington State dependency cases are achieving relational permanency, whether cases meet statutory guidelines, and reasons why timelines are not met.

AOC is to submit the annual report to the Office of Civil Legal Aid, and the Washington State Office of Public Defense.

Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the AOC is to, in consultation with others, identify measures of relational permanency and child well-being and shall report to the Legislature by July 1, 2025, in compliance with state law, the following information:

- a plan for reporting on child well-being and relational permanency;
- how to make such information publicly available;
- what can be reported using existing data;
- what additional information should be collected; and
- what data-sharing agreements are necessary to ensure an accurate picture of the needs of families in the dependency system.

In making these determinations, the AOC must consult with representatives who have knowledge of data collection systems from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI); the Health Care Authority (HCA); the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF); the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS); and any other entity holding relevant data or expertise.

To collect data necessary to evaluate the relational permanency and well-being of dependent children, the AOC may execute data-sharing agreements with OSPI, HCA, DCYF, and DSHS.

Court forms may indicate whether an order or portion of an order was agreed or contested, and if contested, by which party or parties.

**Appropriation:** The bill contains a section or sections to limit implementation to the availability of amounts appropriated for that specific purpose.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 18, 2024.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony On Proposed Substitute:** PRO: There may have been years of ineffective policies, but being able to look at the data, we're able to make effective policy decisions going forward, with more transparency. Right now the only measure of success is whether a dependency meets the statutory deadline but that doesn't tell us how the child is doing, how many schools they have attended. Since 2007 the AOC has been collecting this data which is also shared online but AOC lacks access to important data that this bill will help them get access to. Children are languishing in the system. Data will help us understand how they are doing, what kind of relationships they are developing, and it sends a message to courts that we want to be looking at more than the length of time in care. Having better data will help improve the foster care system. We should include data about incarceration rates - how many children in dependency have incarcerated parents.

OTHER: The data is helpful because it's important to look at what's going on in DCYF.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Matt Boehnke, Prime Sponsor; Tara Urs, King County Department of Public Defense; Kelly Warner-King, Administrative Office of the Courts; Laurie Lippold, Partners for Our Children; Daniel Lugo, Treehouse; Jim Chambers.

OTHER: SHAUN BEALS.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.