

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1600

As Reported by House Committee On:
Local Government

Title: An act relating to modifying the fee to support family services.

Brief Description: Modifying the fee to support family services.

Sponsors: Representatives Eslick, Parshley, Ryu, Simmons, Macri and Fosse.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Local Government: 2/4/25, 2/7/25 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Increases the maximum fee that county legislative authorities may impose on marriage licenses for the support of family support services from \$15 to \$30.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Duerr, Chair; Parshley, Vice Chair; Stuebe, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Griffey, Hunt and Zahn.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Klicker, Ranking Minority Member.

Staff: Kellen Wright (786-7134).

Background:

In Washington, marriage is a civil contract between two people 18 years of age or older that

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are not otherwise precluded from entering into the marriage. Before marrying, the parties must obtain a marriage license from the county auditor. In order to file a marriage license application, applicants must provide information such as their name, social security number, and place of birth, and must pay the required fees.

These fees include those specific to marriage license applications as well as those generally applicable to the recording of documents. One fee that is specific to marriage licenses is a fee of up to \$15 that a county legislative authority can impose for the support of funding family support services such as family support centers. This fee is additional to other fees imposed on the marriage license application.

Summary of Bill:

The fee that county legislative authorities can impose on marriage license applications for the purpose of funding family support services may be up to \$30.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) These kind of facilities have been around since the 1880s, with the original centers helping immigrants acclimate to their new country, and the modern versions work similarly. The original fee was put in place in the 1990s, and provided support for families in economically devastated areas who needed support. Most counties collect the fee, and the fee has generated over \$600,000 in revenue. A case study shows that the child welfare system saves \$3 for every dollar invested in family resources centers. These centers are community-based, usually nonprofit, nongovernment organizations that can be subsidized by the government for their operations. There are about 120 family support centers in the state. These are single-door entries into human services, and are trusted organizations that allow families to access food, housing, and other resources. These centers can have Boys and Girls Clubs, early learning facilities, and senior centers. These organizations meet the needs and interests of their specific communities, and are not one-size-fits-all. These organizations generally run on lean budgets and with volunteers. There is a need to make this work in difficult budgeting circumstances. This bill would allow optional county funding to make the centers more sustainable and provide critical resources to families. This fee will make a significant impact on family resource centers. This bill is about taking

care of families, and these centers can help to prevent child abuse and increase prevention efforts. People getting married generally don't care what the cost is.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Carolyn Eslick, prime sponsor; Nathan Koch, Washington Family Support Network; and Kim Justice, Partners for Our Children.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.