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**SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6007**

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**State of Washington**

**69th Legislature**

**2026 Regular Session**

**By** Senate Human Services (originally sponsored by Senator Warnick)

READ FIRST TIME 02/04/26.

1 AN ACT Relating to authorizing the Washington state institute for  
2 public policy to evaluate outcomes related to assessment practices as  
3 it relates to screening-in cases at the department of children,  
4 youth, and families; adding a new section to chapter 13.34 RCW; and  
5 creating a new section.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that the statewide  
8 dependency filing rate has consistently dropped annually since 2016.  
9 Simultaneously, Washington has seen a measured rise in the number of  
10 critical incidents and near critical incidents. The legislature finds  
11 it is necessary to understand the relationship between screening  
12 tools used by the department of children, youth, and families, and  
13 the impact they have on the initiation of dependencies and out-of-  
14 home placements.

15 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 13.34  
16 RCW to read as follows:

17 (1) Within amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the  
18 Washington state institute for public policy shall, to the extent  
19 possible:

1 (a) Perform an assessment of the department of children, youth,  
2 and families' use of screening tools for child welfare referrals, to  
3 determine whether and how those tools and processes affect outcomes;

4 (b) Address, at a minimum, how screening leads to family  
5 assessment response, voluntary and mandatory services, dependencies,  
6 out-of-home placements, rereferrals, and child fatalities or near  
7 fatalities.

8 (2) The institute shall report any preliminary findings to the  
9 legislature and the department of children, youth, and families by  
10 December 1, 2026.

11 (3) The institute shall report its findings to the legislature  
12 and the department of children, youth, and families by September 1,  
13 2027.

14 (4) The department of children, youth, and families and the  
15 Washington state family and children's ombuds must cooperate with the  
16 institute to facilitate access to data or other resources necessary  
17 to complete this work.

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