

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5520

As Reported By House Committee On:
Children & Family Services

Title: An act relating to placement of children.

Brief Description: Modifying placement of juveniles, specifically addressing independent living.

Sponsors: Senators Hargrove, Long and Franklin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Children & Family Services: 3/21/95, 3/31/95 [DP].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Cooke, Chairman; Lambert, Vice Chairman; Stevens, Vice Chairman; Thibaudeau, Ranking Minority Member; Brown, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Boldt; Buck; Carrell; Patterson and Tokuda.

Staff: David Knutson (786-7146).

Background: When a child is found by a court to be abused, neglected, abandoned, or have a parent, guardian, or custodian incapable of caring for her or him, the court may order the child committed to the care and custody of the Department of Social and Health Services for placement in foster care. The agency charged with the child's care is required to provide the court with a permanency plan of care for the child. The options available for permanency plans include; return of the child to the family home, adoption, guardianship, or long-term relative or foster care placement until the child is 18.

Summary of Bill: The options available under the permanency plan for a child are increased to allow independent living for children 16 years of age and older. A permanency plan for independent living will include the services to be provided for a successful transition from foster care to independent living. The court is required to make a finding that the services provided to a child transitioning from foster care to independent living will allow the child to manage her or his financial, personal, social, educational, and nonfinancial affairs. The department is prohibited from

discharging a child to an independent living situation before the child's 18th birthday unless the child has become legally emancipated.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: For a small number of 16 to 18 year olds living in foster or group care, independent living is the appropriate permanency plan. For these youth, teaching independent living skills will assist them after they turn 18.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Sophia Kouidou-Giles, Division of Children and Family Services, Department of Social and Health Services (pro).