

**HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS
HB 2605**

Title: An act relating to safety of group homes.

Brief Description: Providing additional security to communities where a group home is located.

Sponsors: Representatives O'Brien, Ballasiotes, Radcliff, Benson, Constantine, Cooper, Lantz, Robertson, Hatfield, Hankins, Scott, Dunn, Backlund, Costa, McDonald, Mitchell, Thompson, Quall, and Delvin.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONS

Hearing Date: January 27, 1998.

Prepared By: Mark G. Hamilton, Counsel (786-7310).

Background: Currently the only restrictions on group home placement are local zoning ordinances and requirements. There are no specific statutory safety requirements for group homes in communities. There is no comprehensive system by which information regarding juvenile offenders may be shared among all of the various parties involved in the juvenile justice and corrections system.

Summary: The bill adds new sections to chapter 74.13 RCW, regarding child welfare services.

Section 1. *Public Hearing.* Requires a public hearing, with notice and opportunity for community comment, before placing a group home in a community.

Community Councils; Veto Power. Requires establishment of community councils of concerned citizens to monitor and provide input on decisions regarding group homes. The community council will have the final authority whether individual juveniles are admitted to group homes in the neighborhood, based on the juvenile's criminal history.

Section 2. *Staff Security Requirements.* Prohibits those with a felony conviction within the past 5 years from working at a group home.

Section 3. *Physical Security Requirements.* Provides for the following minimum physical security requirements: (1) alarm system to monitor residents and notify of an escape; (2) 24-hour external video cameras; (3) doors and windows with working locks. Also provides that local police may make unannounced visits to check security and the treatment and status of occupants.

Section 4. *Information and Records Sharing.* Requires a program of information retrieval and sharing of juvenile criminal records between the

Department of Social and Health Services, the group home staff, local police, other police departments within the state and in any other states which have had contact with the offender, current and former school districts, juvenile courts which have had contact with the offender, and any correctional facilities which have had the offender in their custody. The purpose is to provide all interested parties with full and immediate access to the resident's arrest and conviction records.

Rules Authority: No.

Fiscal Note: Requested January 23, 1998.

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