

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESSB 5995

As Reported by House Committee On:
Children & Family Services

Title: An act relating to information sharing among the courts, providers, divisions, and agencies serving dependent children and their families.

Brief Description: Providing for information sharing among the courts, providers, divisions, and agencies serving dependent children and their families.

Sponsor: By Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections (originally sponsored by Senators Long, Hargrove and Stevens).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Children & Family Services: 3/28/01 [DP].

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill

- The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) is required to establish and use guidelines designed to facilitate communication of relevant information among the various interested parties in child dependency cases.
- Law enforcement must notify the DSHS when a child is present at the site of a methamphetamine lab.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Boldt, Republican Co-Chair; Tokuda, Democratic Co-Chair; Kagi, Democratic Vice Chair; Morell, Republican Vice Chair; Ballasiotes, Campbell, Darneille, Dickerson, Miloscia and Pflug.

Staff: Deborah Frazier (786-7152).

Background:

The fatality review team charged with the responsibility of investigating the recent death of a child involved in a dependency action issued a report that included recommendations for improvements to the services system.

The report cited the need for timely and appropriate distribution of information among the parties involved in child dependency cases.

Summary of Bill:

The DSHS is required to establish and use guidelines designed to facilitate communication of relevant information among the various interested parties in child dependency cases.

Law enforcement must notify the DSHS when a child is present at the site of a methamphetamine lab.

The guidelines must be consistent with state and federal laws on confidentiality. The provisions of the bill do not create a private cause of action.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available. New fiscal note requested on March 27, 2001.

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

Testimony For: The department acknowledges the importance of communications among all parties involved in dependencies. We will be giving priority to developing practice applications consistent with the direction in this bill. We would like to see some clarification in the section related to law enforcement reporting a child's presence at a suspected meth lab to the department. Where methamphetamine is a common activity for law enforcement, the department already closely coordinates with law enforcement.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: (In support with concerns) Marianna Conner, Department of Social and Health Services.