

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 2346

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to crisis residential centers.

Brief Description: Concerning crisis residential centers.

Sponsors: House Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Representative Kagi).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Ways & Means: 4/14/09, 4/18/09 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 4/20/09, 98-0.

Senate Amended.

Passed Senate: 4/25/09, 49-0.

House Concurred.

Passed House: 4/25/09, 94-0.

Passed Legislature.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Expands from five to 15 the maximum number of days a youth may reside at a semi-secure Crisis Residential Center (CRC) or a community-based secure CRC.
- Expressly authorizes the Department of Social and Health Services to refer or place a youth at community-based secure CRCs.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 22 members: Representatives Linville, Chair; Ericks, Vice Chair; Alexander, Ranking Minority Member; Bailey, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Dammeier, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Cody, Conway, Darneille, Haigh, Hinkle, Hunt, Hunter, Kagi, Kenney, Kessler, Pettigrew, Priest, Ross, Schmick, Seaquist and Sullivan.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Staff: Sydney Forrester (786-7120) and Melissa Palmer (786-7388)

Background:

Crisis Residential Centers (CRCs) have been operated in Washington since the 1980s to serve as temporary residences for youth in crisis due to family conflict, abuse or neglect, homelessness, chemical dependence, or unmet mental health needs. In 1995 the Legislature enacted the Becca Bill, named for Rebecca Hedman, a thirteen year-old girl who repeatedly ran away from home and other residential facilities, and eventually was murdered in Spokane. The Becca Bill established secure CRCs with the goal of allowing youth exhibiting behaviors endangering themselves to be held for up to five days in secure facilities for assessment and planning purposes.

The CRCs consist of both semi-secure facilities and secure facilities. Secure CRCs include some facilities located within or adjacent to a juvenile detention facility, but do not allow for in-person contact between youth in the CRC and juveniles being held in the detention facility. The remaining secure CRCs are community-based. The Department of Social and Health Services contracts statewide for 44 secure beds, 13 of which are located within or adjacent to a juvenile detention facility, and 34 semi-secure beds. The maximum time a youth may reside in a CRC is five days, including youth who may be transferred between a semi-secure facility and a secure facility.

The CRCs may service youth who are homeless, those who seek shelter, and those transported by law enforcement or the DSHS. Assessment services provided to youth frequently include the convening of a multi-disciplinary team to assist in problem solving and planning.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The maximum number of days a youth may reside in a semi-secure CRC or a community-based secure CRC is changed from five to 15 days. The DSHS may place a youth in a secure CRC only in cases where there is no reasonable cause to believe that the youth has run away from home or foster care due to abuse or neglect. The maximum length of stay for youth residing in a detention center-based secure CRC remains at five days.

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) This bill was introduced with reluctance but it is an opportunity. There are two types of facilities that are operated in this state: crisis residential centers (CRCs) and secure crisis residential centers (SCRCs). The staffing ratios and admittance requirements or eligibility are very narrow and restrictive. An amendment that would provide for facilities to

operate both CRCs and SCRCs and have more reasonable operational requirements is being offered. Some of these facilities have as low as an 8.7 percent occupancy rate. A 10 to 20 percent utilization is not a good use of resources. We need to find a way to serve this population of youth in a much more effective manner.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Kagi, prime sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.