

HB 2106-S2 - DIGEST

(DIGEST AS ENACTED)

Improves child welfare outcomes through the phased implementation of strategic and proven reforms.

Creates the child welfare transformation design committee to establish a transition plan containing recommendations to the legislature and the governor for the provision of child welfare services by supervising agencies. The committee expires July 1, 2015.

Addresses: (1) Conversion of DSHS current contracts for child welfare services into performance-based contracts;

(2) Reinvestment of savings into evidence-based prevention and intervention programs to prevent the need for or reduce the duration of foster care placements;

(3) Services to homeless families with children;

(4) DSHS providing statewide services for child protective services investigation;

(5) Monitoring foster home and residential services providers; and

(6) Providing legal services to contracted providers for matters in children's dependency and termination of parental rights cases.

Repeals statutes relating to: (1) Drug-affected and alcohol-affected infants, reports and studies;

(2) Abuse and neglect of adolescents;

(3) Child care for children at risk of child abuse or neglect;

(4) Contracts for regional foster parent liaisons; and

(5) The intensive resource home pilot program for youth in foster care.

VETO MESSAGE ON 2SHB 2106

May 19, 2009

To the Honorable Speaker and Members,
The House of Representatives of the State of Washington

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I have approved, except for Sections 1, 14 and 19, Second Substitute House Bill 2106 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to improving child welfare outcomes through the phased implementation of strategic and proven reforms."

Section 1 of the bill is an intent section and includes a sentence that says "It is the duty of the state to provide children at risk of out-of-home placement and their families

with reasonable opportunities to access supportive services that enhance their safety and well-being." The bill does not define the term "children at risk of out-of-home placement," but does define "child welfare services" broadly. This section may be interpreted as creating a broad new entitlement that I do not believe was intended.

Section 14 amends RCW 74.15.030 to specify that unfounded allegations of child abuse or neglect shall be disclosed to supervising agencies. This language is in direct conflict with existing statutory language in RCW 26.44.031(4) which specifies that an unfounded, screened-out, or inconclusive report may not be disclosed to any licensed provider.

Section 19 directs the Department of Social and Health Services (Department) to, "within existing resources...develop a curriculum to train child protective services staff in forensic techniques used for investigating allegations of child abuse and neglect." The Department cannot absorb costs associated with unfunded new activities at this time. I agree with the goal of ensuring the quality of our investigations and the local investigation protocols involving the Department, law enforcement and prosecutors are an existing mechanism that can be used to further this goal.

For these reasons, I have vetoed Sections 1, 14 and 19 of Second Substitute House Bill 2106.

With the exception of sections 1, 14 and 19, Second Substitute House Bill 2106 is approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Christine O. Gregoire
Governor