
SENATE BILL 5807

State of Washington

60th Legislature

2007 Regular Session

By Senators Stevens and Hargrove

Read first time 02/01/2007. Referred to Committee on Human Services & Corrections.

1 AN ACT Relating to child protective services pilot programs; adding
2 a new section to chapter 44.28 RCW; creating new sections; and
3 providing an expiration date.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature recognizes the need to test
6 innovative practices designed to improve the efficacy and efficiency of
7 child protective services investigations. The state has an important
8 interest in helping to promote healthy, safe relationships between
9 children and families. The state also has an interest in encouraging
10 intensive training and a supportive team approach for social workers
11 who are committed to investigating the most difficult child protective
12 services cases.

13 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The secretary of the department of social
14 and health services shall establish an intensive child protective
15 services training pilot program in two field offices of the children's
16 administration. In selecting the two field offices to participate in
17 the program, the secretary shall endeavor to:

1 (1) Site one in an urban office and the other in a rural office;
2 and

3 (2) Site the intensive child protective services training pilot
4 offices in offices other than those selected pursuant to section 4 of
5 this act, to the extent necessary to facilitate evaluation of the pilot
6 program results.

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) The social workers who participate in
8 the intensive child protective services training pilot program shall
9 receive basic investigative training at the criminal justice training
10 center, operated by the criminal justice training commission, in such
11 areas as interviewing witnesses, analyzing and preserving evidence, and
12 writing investigation reports. The training through the criminal
13 justice training commission may also include courses in staff safety,
14 including basic self-defense and handling volatile situations.
15 Participants in the pilot program may also receive specialized training
16 in drug investigations.

17 (2) The social workers who participate in the intensive child
18 protective services training pilot program shall receive training from
19 medical experts or child psychologists in such areas as recognizing
20 physical abuse injuries to children and assessing whether children
21 present symptoms of self-mutilation or self-harm.

22 (3) The children's administration may provide other courses of
23 advanced training to social workers who participate in the pilot
24 program, in such areas as advanced critical thinking, analysis, and
25 techniques for combating confirmatory bias. For the purposes of this
26 section, "confirmatory bias" means the inclination to emphasize
27 evidence that tends to support a preexisting conclusion, rather than
28 continuing to objectively analyze new evidence.

29 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** The secretary of the department of social
30 and health services shall establish a team investigation pilot program
31 for child protective services social workers in two field offices of
32 the children's administration. In selecting the two field offices to
33 participate in the program, the secretary shall endeavor to:

34 (1) Site one in an urban office and the other in a rural office;
35 and

1 (2) Site the team investigation pilot offices in offices other than
2 those selected pursuant to section 2 of this act, to the extent
3 necessary to facilitate evaluation of the pilot program results.

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** (1) The supervisors in the offices
5 participating in the team investigation pilot program shall assign
6 social workers in teams of two in cases in which:

7 (a) A referral is particularly urgent and an investigation must be
8 undertaken and completed quickly;

9 (b) A referral involves complex or ambiguous facts, as reported; or

10 (c) Multiple referrals have been made, involving similar facts and
11 the same family or child.

12 (2) A team of two social workers responding to an urgent or complex
13 case may include one team member who is more experienced than the
14 other, if a more experienced social worker is available to respond to
15 the referral.

16 (3) Investigative responsibilities, such as gathering evidence
17 through the case and management information system or interviewing
18 witnesses, may be split between members of the investigative team.

19 (4) Court appearances and preparation may be handled by one member
20 of the team or the other.

21 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** A new section is added to chapter 44.28 RCW
22 to read as follows:

23 (1) The joint legislative audit and review committee shall evaluate
24 the intensive child protective services training pilot program and the
25 team investigation pilot program and make a preliminary report to the
26 legislature by December 1, 2009, and a final report by May 1, 2010.

27 (2) The joint legislative audit and review committee shall design
28 its evaluation of the intensive child protective services training
29 pilot program and the team investigation pilot program to determine if
30 the pilot programs:

31 (a) Produce more efficient investigations, with reports being
32 completed more quickly;

33 (b) Enhance staff morale and staff retention, as compared to other
34 field offices;

35 (c) Generate higher quality reports, with documented evidence that
36 clearly supports findings of abuse or neglect;

1 (d) Reduce the number of child abuse and neglect allegations
2 involving the same children and families;

3 (e) Reduce the number of continuances or delays in court
4 proceedings; or

5 (f) Reduce the number of dependency petitions that are dismissed
6 because there is insufficient evidence or there are problems with case
7 investigations or documentation.

8 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** (1) Sections 1 through 5 of this act expire
9 July 1, 2009.

10 (2) Section 6 of this act expires July 1, 2010.

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