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**SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6068**

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**State of Washington**

**68th Legislature**

**2024 Regular Session**

**By** Senate Human Services (originally sponsored by Senators Boehnke and C. Wilson)

1 AN ACT Relating to reporting on dependency outcomes; amending RCW  
2 13.34.820; and creating a new section.

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

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** Dependency courts should work to ensure  
5 the well-being of dependent children and to ensure that every young  
6 person who leaves foster care has relational permanency - meaning  
7 they have various long-term relationships that help them feel loved  
8 and connected. This includes relationships with siblings, parents,  
9 family members, extended family, family friends, mentors, and where  
10 appropriate, former foster family members.

11 Legal permanency, achieved through reunification, guardianship,  
12 or adoption is important, but it is not the only way to provide a  
13 sense of belonging and meaningful connections for young people. The  
14 federal children's bureau has cautioned that, legal permanence alone  
15 does not guarantee secure attachments and lifelong relationships. The  
16 relational aspects of permanency are critically important and  
17 fundamental to overall well-being, administration on children, youth  
18 and families, information memorandum ACYF-CB-IM-20-09, January 5,  
19 2021. Relational permanency is one component of a child's overall  
20 well-being. Washington state's data collection should reflect the

1 importance of both relational and legal permanency as well as child  
2 well-being.

3 **Sec. 2.** RCW 13.34.820 and 2017 3rd sp.s. c 6 s 309 are each  
4 amended to read as follows:

5 (1) The administrative office of the courts, in consultation with  
6 the attorney general's office and the department, shall compile an  
7 annual report, providing information about ~~((eases that fail to meet  
8 statutory guidelines to achieve permanency for dependent children))~~  
9 dependency cases including available data about whether children in  
10 Washington state dependency cases are achieving relational  
11 permanency, whether cases meet statutory guidelines, and reasons why  
12 timelines are not met, whether an order, or a portion of an order, is  
13 agreed to or contested and by which party or parties, and how many  
14 children in dependency have incarcerated parents.

15 (2) ~~((The))~~ In compliance with RCW 43.01.036, the administrative  
16 office of the courts shall submit the annual report required by this  
17 section to appropriate committees of the legislature by December 1st  
18 of each year, beginning on December 1, 2007. The administrative  
19 office of the courts shall also submit the annual report to a  
20 representative of the foster parent association of Washington state,  
21 the office of civil legal aid, and the Washington state office of  
22 public defense.

23 (3) The annual report shall include information regarding whether  
24 foster parents received timely notification of dependency hearings as  
25 required by RCW 13.34.096 and 13.34.145 and whether caregivers  
26 submitted reports to the court.

27 (4) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this  
28 specific purpose, the administrative office of the courts shall, in  
29 consultation with others, identify measures of relational permanency  
30 and child well-being and shall report to the legislature by July 1,  
31 2025, in compliance with RCW 43.01.036, the following information:

32 (a) A plan for reporting on child well-being and relational  
33 permanency;

34 (b) How to make such information publicly available;

35 (c) What can be reported using existing data;

36 (d) What additional information should be collected; and

37 (e) What data-sharing agreements are necessary to ensure an  
38 accurate picture of the needs of families in the dependency system.

1       (5) In making these determinations the administrative office of  
2 the courts must consult with representatives who have knowledge of  
3 data collection systems from the office of the superintendent of  
4 public instruction; the health care authority; the department of  
5 children, youth, and families; the department of social and health  
6 services; the department of corrections; and any other entity holding  
7 relevant data or expertise.

8       (6) Consistent with RCW 13.50.280, to collect data necessary to  
9 evaluate the relational permanency and well-being of dependent  
10 children, the administrative office of the courts may execute data-  
11 sharing agreements with the office of the superintendent of public  
12 instruction, the health care authority, the department of children,  
13 youth, and families, and the department of social and health  
14 services.

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