

SCR

15

FISCAL NOTE

REQUEST: Senate HESS Committee
 Revision Date: _____ Affected Agency: Office of the Governor
 Title: SCR 15: Requesting the Alaska Comm BRU: AK Comm Children & Youth
 Children & Youth-special attention to adolescents.
 Sponsor: Pearce Components: _____

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS)

OPERATING	FY 91	FY 92	FY93	FY 94	FY 95	FY 96
Personal Services	0.00					
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants, Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

CAPITAL						
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REVENUE						
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FUNDING: (THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS)

General Fund						
Federal Fund						
Other						
TOTAL	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

POSITIONS:

Full-Time						
Part-Time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (ATTACH A SEPARATE PAGE IF NECESSARY)

Prepared By: Senate HESS Committee Phone: 465-3818
 Division: _____ Date: 23-Apr-91
 Approved By: Senator Arliss Sturgulewski
 Agency: Senate HESS Committee Date: 23 April 1991

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 OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT & BUDGET
 AGENCY(IES)

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STATE OF ALASKA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
JUNEAU

ALASKA COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH

POSITION PAPER - SCR 15

In the 1988 report by the Governor's Interim Commission on Children and Youth, Our Greatest Natural Resource, Investing in the Future of Alaska's Children, the Commission documented the growing problem of increased teenage pregnancy rates in Alaska and made recommendations.

SCR 15 asks the Alaska Commission on Children and Youth to focus increased attention on the needs of adolescents to avoid early pregnancy and achieve their full potential. The Commission is well aware of the responsibilities mandated by Statute, and they would like to go on record as being in full support of this resolution.

With the creation of the Alaska Commission on Children and Youth came Statute which requires the development of a comprehensive statewide plan that identifies the needs of children and youth and provides recommendations to enhance their quality of life. Our responsibilities are many and our commitment is real. In developing our statewide plan we will look to the work of groups like the Teen Pregnancy Task Force for insight into the problems facing adolescents and children alike.

We understand what this resolution asks of us. We thank those individuals who gave their hearts and time on the Teen Pregnancy Task Force, and we look forward to working with them as we develop our comprehensive statewide plan.

RECOMMENDATION:

Encourage the Governor's Commission on Children and Youth to give more consideration to the needs of adolescents than has been given in the past.

Issue

The Task Force commends the Governor's Commission on Children and Youth for the efforts they have made in addressing the problems of pre-adolescent children. However, probably because the Commission feels the needs of younger children are more urgent, a proportionate amount of effort has not been given to the problems of adolescents. The Task Force encourages the Governor's Commission to go to the source of many of the problems they are having to deal with in addressing the needs of younger children. Many of these children are the product of adolescent parents. A significant number of adolescent mothers give birth to infants of lower birth weight and with more developmental problems than children of older parents. These offspring frequently suffer more from child abuse, neglect, lack of good nutrition, and financial instability. In addition, these children of adolescents are frequently more at risk of repeating the cycle of early pregnancy, of having lower self-esteem, and of having a higher school drop out rate.

Implementation

Replace retiring members of the Governor's Commission on Children and Youth with individuals having the problems of adolescents as their primary interest and/or expertise.

Cost

This recommendation should have no additional cost. It merely requests a more equal distribution of effort from the Governor's Commission on Children and Youth. That commission is already mandated to deal with the problems of all children, including adolescents.

Benefits

The Task Force believes that with more attention paid to the problems of adolescents in all areas of prevention and prenatal and parenting services, the greater the benefits to society. Alaska can reduce the \$51 million a year it spends annually to support needy families of Alaska mothers who had children when they were teenagers and the \$4 million a year spent to support parents who are still teenagers. While these figures cover only the costs of AFDC, Food Stamps and Medicaid, other costs such as those for child care, protective services for abused adolescent mothers and their children, housing and counselling can also be reduced.

RECOMMENDATION:

Identify the Governor's Commission on Children and Youth as the oversight body for implementation of the Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenthood Task Force recommendations.

Issue

The Task Force recommendations were designed to help Alaska's adolescents avoid pregnancy, as well as to help adolescents who do become pregnant to receive prenatal care and help in improving their parenting skills. However, simply making recommendations will not bring about the desired goals. If we stop here, without some organization pushing the recommendations through the legislature and through their implementation and follow up stages, the Task Force's efforts will have been wasted. Adolescents will continue to become pregnant, and the rate of adolescent pregnancy will continue to escalate.

Not all programs suggested here will be perfect, and none will be effective over night. Minor adjustments to programs will be necessary to assure their maximum effectiveness, and some organization must be responsible to see that these programs are both implemented and adjusted accordingly.

The Governor's Commission on Children and Youth was set up to deal with the problems of all of Alaska's children, including adolescents; and as such, is the logical organization to follow up on the Task Force recommendations.

Cost

The Governor's Commission on Children and Youth has already set up a network to address problems of children in Alaska. Making use of this network and experience would be the most efficient means of assuring the effectiveness of the Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenthood Task Force recommendations. No additional cost to the State is anticipated.

Benefits

With an oversight agency such as the Governor's Commission on Children and Youth, all of the recommendations of the Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenthood Task Force can be coordinated. This will help assure that the duplication of services is minimized and those areas where services are lacking are covered. Since our recommendations include programs run at all levels of government, and involve private agencies and organizations as well as state agencies, the Children's Commission would be best qualified to coordinate the implementation of our recommendations. The Children's Commission was designed to represent all sectors.