

HCS SB 323 -- COMMUNITY CHILDREN'S SERVICES FUND AND FOSTER PARENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS

SPONSOR: Graham (Baker, 25)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Special Committee on Family Services by a vote of 9 to 0.

This substitute changes the laws regarding the Community Children's Services Fund and the Foster Parent's Bill of Rights.

COMMUNITY CHILDREN'S SERVICES FUND

A nine-member board of directors, chosen by the governing county officials, must be appointed prior to the establishment of a tax for the Community Children's Services Fund. The board is allowed to contract for services, actions, or endeavors necessary to fulfill its required duties. Currently, the board members are appointed after the tax is approved by the voters.

FOSTER PARENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS

The substitute requires the Children's Division within the Department of Social Services and its contractors to:

- (1) Treat foster parents in accordance with the ethical standards established in the Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to Colleagues, within their code of ethics, so that they are recognized as part of a child welfare team and not as clients;
- (2) Give foster parents written notification of the Foster Parents' Bill of Rights when initially licensed or at the time of renewal;
- (3) Schedule regular opportunities for foster parent training;
- (4) Give foster parents and potential adoptive parents all pertinent information, including medical records, placements, behaviors, family history, and reports of abuse regarding a child to protect the foster or adoptive family;
- (5) Inform foster parents in a timely manner of all team meetings regarding licensure status or children placed in their home;
- (6) Define the procedures that foster parents must follow for children using respite care;
- (7) Allow foster parents to share with practitioners and school

personnel medical information that is necessary to make safe and appropriate decisions regarding the care for the physical health and educational needs of the child;

(8) Schedule visits at a time that is convenient for all parties involved;

(9) Provide foster parents with training that addresses:

(a) Cultural competence issues such as physical appearance, religious and cultural practices, and community resources that can provide additional training; and

(b) Policies and procedures for licensing, foster care regulations, and the adoption process;

(10) Give foster parents first consideration when placing a child who is not placed with a relative;

(11) Allow fair and impartial time for foster parents to address licensure, case management decisions, and delivery of services issues; and

(12) Provide written documentation of the division's policies to foster parents upon their request.

Foster parents will be required to:

(1) Follow the discipline policies of the division;

(2) Give two weeks' notice when requesting the removal of a child;

(3) Notify the caseworker within 60 days after being informed of an adoption inquiry if they would like to adopt a foster child; and

(4) Be given at least two weeks' notice by the courts before any court hearing regarding the child in their care.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on state funds in FY 2008, FY 2009, and FY 2010.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill does not introduce a new tax, but rather ensures that voters know who the board members are before voting on the tax for the Community Children's Services Fund. The bill is important because by creating the board, it can access federal, state, and private funding.

Testifying for the bill were Senator Graham; and Wes Wagner,

Boone County Family Services.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.