

HB 1381 -- JOINT COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERSIGHT

SPONSOR: Peters

This bill establishes the Joint Committee on Children's Services Oversight of the General Assembly composed of seven members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker and Minority Floor Leader and seven members of the Senate appointed by the President Pro Tem and the Minority Floor Leader. The joint committee is required to:

- (1) Review current state policies on children and youth as reflected in Missouri laws, regulations, programs, services, budgetary priorities, and provide oversight;
- (2) Study problems that jeopardize the development, well-being, and lives of Missouri children and youth, including certain specified problems;
- (3) Define and establish the components, guidelines, and objectives of a comprehensive state policy to ensure and promote present and future health, welfare, and opportunity for all of Missouri's children and youth;
- (4) Identify any Missouri laws, regulations, programs, services, and budgetary priorities which conflict with the components, guidelines, and objectives of such comprehensive policy;
- (5) Review any contracted service agreement and the ability and effectiveness of department and agency contractors and their services;
- (6) Search for any inter-agency gaps, inconsistencies, and inefficiencies in the implementation or attainment of such comprehensive policy;
- (7) Identify any new laws, regulations, programs, services, and budgetary priorities which are needed to ensure and promote present and future physical, mental, and emotional health, welfare, and opportunity for all of Missouri's children and youth;
- (8) Serve as an in-house informational resource for all members and committees of the general assembly on legislative policy matters concerning children and youth;
- (9) Make any other recommendation to the general assembly and perform such other activities as the joint committee deems necessary;

(10) Meet within thirty days after its creation and organize by selecting a chairperson and a vice chairperson, one of whom must be a member of the senate and the other a member of the house of representatives. The chairperson will alternate between members of the house and senate every two years after the committee's organization;

(11) Meet at least eight times per year and at the call of the chairperson. The committee may meet at locations other than Jefferson City when the committee deems it necessary;

(12) Be staffed by legislative personnel as is deemed necessary to assist the committee in the performance of its duties; and

(13) Compile and submit a report to the general assembly which summarizes the committee's activities, findings, recommendations, and proposals. The report must be submitted no later than the thirty-first of December of each year in which the general assembly convenes in regular session. Copies of the report containing such recommendations must be sent to the appropriate directors of state or local government agencies or departments included in the report.

The joint committee is authorized to:

(1) Create subcommittees related to its purpose;

(2) Request standing committees of the general assembly, the fiscal review committee, and any agencies or entities of state government to study and report on designated policy matters relating to children and youth;

(3) Employ committee staff, including an executive director, subject to appropriations for such purpose. The executive director must have social services experience, child welfare experience, and experience in a position equal to that of an executive director; and

(4) Enter into contracts for technical or professional services, subject to appropriations for such purpose.

The bill specifies certain tasks the Speaker of the House of Representatives and President Pro Tem of the Senate must complete jointly. The members of the committee must serve without compensation but are entitled to reimbursement for actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their official duties.