

SB 819 -- FOSTER CARE

SPONSOR: Cunningham

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass by Consent" by the Special Committee to Improve the Care and Well-Being of Young People by a vote of 11 to 0. Voted "Do Pass- Not Consent" by the Standing Committee on Consent and House Procedure by a vote of 9 to 0.

Currently, contracts entered into by the Children's Division with qualified children's services providers and agencies shall require that a case management plan be developed for each child no later than 14 days after an initial investigation or referral. This bill changes that time frame to 30 days.

Additionally, this bill modifies the current law regarding background checks for persons in an applicant foster parent's home prior to licensing. The division shall obtain fingerprints from specified individuals in the applicant's household and the State Highway Patrol shall assist the division in providing a criminal fingerprint background check in compliance with existing state law. After the initial background check has been completed, the State Highway Patrol shall provide ongoing electronic updates to the background check. These ongoing checks shall end when the applicant ceases to be a licensed foster parent.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that allowing more time for the case management time period gives more time to learn about the child and develop a complete understanding of the situation, as well as make the time frame for private contractors and state investigators the same. The State Highway Patrol background checks keep children in foster care safer by continuously checking on the foster parents.

Testifying for the bill were Senator Cunningham; Fosteradopt Connect; and the Missouri Department of Social Services.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.