

HB 2307 -- CHILD PROTECTIONS FOR CHILDREN'S HOMES

SPONSOR: Schnelting

This bill adds provisions relating to child protections for certain children's homes.

Instead of applying for a license with the Department of Social Services, residential care facilities or organizations may register with a qualified association, provided the facility or organization meets the requirements set forth by such a qualified association and the association meets the following requirements:

- 1) Is a well-established organization that has been in business for a minimum of 20 years;
- 2) Publishes and requires compliance with its written standards;
- 3) Keeps copies of such standards on file with the Department of Social Services; and
- 4) Has a board of directors able to conduct oversight of the association's member organizations.

The bill sets parameters for the registration process, including proof that the facility or organization remains compliant with minimum fire, safety, health, and sanitary standards required by applicable state law or local ordinance.

Additionally, as part of the registration application, each facility or organization must furnish to the qualified association the following:

- 1) The names and ages of children being cared for;
- 2) The names of children who have been received from out of state or who have been sent out of state during the past calendar year;
- 3) The names of children who have left the facility or organization during the past year, the length of their stay, and the nature of their placement;
- 4) The names of all personnel; and
- 5) Proof that the facility is in compliance with published minimum standards that are on file with the Department.

Once verification has determined all requirements to be met, a member organization's certificate shall be valid for two years.

The bill provides that each child served by such a facility or organization shall be covered by a written contract, to be executed at the time of their admission into the facility or prior to admission, that:

- 1) Enumerates the basic services provided by the facility;
- 2) States that the facility is registered under the provisions of this bill;
- 3) Contains the address and the telephone number of the qualified association;
- 4) Specifies the charges, if any, to the child's parent, legal guardian, or person with legal custody;
- 5) Contains a clear statement regarding disciplinary procedures; and
- 6) Authorizes the owner of the facility, or a designee thereof, to consent to routine and emergency medical care on behalf of the parent, legal guardian, or person with legal custody, provided that person is notified by the owner of any medical care being provided.

The bill establishes the "Child Protection Board" within the Department, to consist of 10 members who are appointed by the Governor by and with the advice and consent of the Senate. The bill specifies the makeup of the Board, as well as provides that members shall be appointed based on recommendations made by faith-based child care agencies, mental health boards, and similar entities.

The Board is required to hold an annual meeting, as well as establish procedures, provide written opinions and recommendations to any standard changes, and provide to the Department any recommendations for improvement.

The Board may deny, suspend, or revoke the registration of a participating facility or organization that fails to comply with the standards established by the qualified association. The Board shall notify the qualified association and the Department within 10 days of the suspension or revocation of the registration.

Any facility that meets the requirements of the qualified association may apply for a license with the Department, as specified in Chapter 210, RSMo. A facility that applies for and receives a license is no longer eligible to operate under the provisions of this bill.