

HB 764 -- REGISTRATION PROCESS FOR CERTAIN CHILDREN'S HOMES

SPONSOR: Gragg

Under this bill, a facility or organization seeking to provide care for children can register with a qualified association, as described in the bill, in place of obtaining a child care license. The qualified association must have been in place for a minimum of 20 years, must publish and require compliance with the association's written standards and file copies of those standards with the Department of Social Services, and must have a board of directors able to conduct oversight of member organizations. Upon filing a registration application with the qualified association and meeting the association's requirements and the local or state fire, safety, health, sanitation, and personnel screening requirements, the facility or organization must receive, at no charge, a certificate of registration from the association that will be valid for two years.

The parent, legal guardian, or person having legal custody of the child and the facility or organization registered with the qualified association must have a written contract for each child cared for by the facility or organization that sets forth the services provided by the facility or organization, the registration with and contact information of the qualified organization, the cost of the services, the disciplinary procedures, and authorization for consent to routine or emergency medical care of the child.

This bill establishes the "Child Protection Board" within the Department to provide oversight of the qualified association and to report to the Department as needed. The Board must consist of 10 members, appointed by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate, as described in the bill. The Board must independently review any decision of the Children's Division in which an alleged perpetrator of child abuse or neglect is aggrieved by a decision of the Division and must make recommendations to the Department. Additionally, the Board may deny, suspend, or revoke a facility or organization's registration if the facility or organization fails to comply with the standards established by the qualified association.

The Department can deny, suspend, or revoke a facility or organization's registration upon a finding of abuse or neglect occurring within the facility or organization and retains the authority to supersede any other recommendation by the Board. The facility or organization will retain the right to appeal the Department's decision to the Administrative Hearing Commission for a final determination.

Any facility or organization that applies for and receives a license under the state's licensing laws will not be eligible to operate under the provisions of this bill.

The Department can place a child within a facility or organization registered under this bill.

Employees of registered facilities and organizations must be subject to background checks.

This bill is the same as SB 525 (2025).