

HCS HBs 1012 & 1376 -- ADOPTION

SPONSOR: Christ

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Children and Families by a vote of 16 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules-Legislative by a vote of 8 to 0.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HBs 1012 & 1376.

This bill establishes a fund and an accompanying tax credit known as the "Zero-Cost Adoption Fund Act".

There is created in the State Treasury the "Zero-Cost Adoption Fund", which will be administered by the Department of Social Services and of which moneys must be used to:

- (1) Support Missouri residents in paying for nonrecurring adoption expenses;
- (2) Provide post-adoption assistance;
- (3) Promote adoption and recruit potential adoptive families;
- (4) Support community-based intervention methods to prevent children from entering foster care; and
- (5) Award grants to implement adoption-sensitive care services in health care settings.

Priority shall be given to adoptions of children out of foster care, though funds may be used for in-state or out-of-state adoptions provided that the person seeking to adopt a child is a Missouri resident.

For all years beginning on or after January 1, 2026, a qualified taxpayer, as defined in the bill, is allowed to claim a tax credit against his or her state tax liability in an amount equal to 100% of his or her qualifying contribution to the "Zero-Cost Adoption Fund" established under the provisions of this bill.

The amount of the credit that is claimed cannot exceed 50% of the qualified taxpayer's state tax liability for the tax year for which the credit is claimed. Additionally, the tax credits authorized under the provisions of this bill cannot be transferred, sold, assigned, or otherwise conveyed, and are not refundable.

The cumulative amount of tax credits that can be allocated to qualified taxpayers in the first year of this program cannot exceed \$25 million, and such amount will be annually adjusted by the Department of Revenue for inflation; the annual increase will stop when the cumulative amount of tax credits that can be allocated reaches \$75 million.

The bill additionally outlines responsibilities of the Department, including rulemaking, reallocating unused tax credits, and establishing a procedure that ensures the cumulative amount of tax credits that can be allocated under the program will be allowed on a first-come, first-served basis from the beginning of the calendar year until August 1.

This Act sunsets on December 31st, six years after the effective date.

This bill is similar to HCS HB 2547 (2024).

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the process to adopt can be a major burden on families and this bill would help get more children connected to forever homes.

Testifying in person for the bill were Representative Christ; Campaign Life Missouri; Foster Adopt Connect; MO Coalition For Children; and Missouri Right To Life.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony and witnesses testifying online can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.