

HB 2241 -- CHILD PROTECTIONS REQUIRED FOR CERTAIN CHILDREN'S HOMES

SPONSOR: Gragg

Under this bill, a child care facility or organization seeking to provide care for children may register with a qualified association, as specified in the bill, in place of obtaining a child care license. The qualified association must:

- (1) Have been in place for a minimum of 20 years,
- (2) Publish and require compliance with the association's written policies and standards for the care of children and file copies of those standards with the Children's Division, and
- (3) Have a board of directors able to conduct oversight of member organizations.

Registration with a qualified association requires each facility or organization to annually file forms provided by the qualified association that includes the name and address of the facility or organization and the number of children the facility is allowed to care for.

A registered facility or organization that meets the requirements of the qualified association may apply to the Children's Division for eligibility to accept foster children. Each registered facility or organization that accepts foster children must annually provide the Division with specified information that includes the names, ages, and permanent addresses of foster children who are cared for in or by the facility or organization and the children who have been cared for in or by the facility or organization during the past calendar year.

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 will receive, at no charge, a certificate of registration from the association that will be valid for two years.

The Division may place a child within a facility or organization registered under this bill, provided that the facility or organization supplies the Division with certain information regarding the foster children placed with the facility or organization and proof that the facility or organization is in

compliance with all applicable regulations promulgated by the Division and minimum standards filed with the Division.

The parent, legal guardian, or agency having legal custody of a 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 also establishes the "Child Protection Board" within the Department of Social Services to provide oversight of facilities and organizations registered with qualified associations and to report to the Department as needed. The Board shall consist of 13 members, as specified in the bill. The Board will independently review any decision of the Children's Division in which a facility or organization could be aggrieved by a substantiated finding of child abuse or neglect by the Division and must make recommendations to the Division, provided that nothing in this provision shall be construed to deny the state the authority to investigate any allegations of a child abuse or neglect.

Additionally, the Division may deny, suspend, or revoke a facility or organization's registration with a qualified association if the facility or organization fails to comply with the standards established by the qualified association or the provisions of this bill. The facility or organization shall retain the right to appeal the Division'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 shall not be eligible to operate under the provisions of this bill.

All personnel of registered facilities and organizations will be subject to background checks and all registered facilities and organizations must comply with state law in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect.

This bill is similar to SB 911 (2026) and SCS SB 525 (2025).