

HB 3243 -- EMERGENCY PLACEMENT OF CERTAIN CHILDREN

SPONSOR: Allen

This bill establishes the "MO Families First Act".

The bill provides that if a state agency or educational institution becomes aware that a parent or legal guardian of a child who is receiving services through a "state system", as that term is defined in the bill, has been subject to a federal enforcement action, the agency or institution must notify the Children's Division within the Department of Social Services within 24 hours of receiving the information. For the purposes of this bill, "federal enforcement action" means any arrest, detention, removal, or deportation proceeding initiated by a federal law enforcement or immigration authority.

Upon notification by the state agency or educational institution, the division is required to promptly administer an assessment to determine the child's well-being, the availability of appropriate caregivers, and certain needs of the child.

School districts and educational institutions are required under this bill to make reasonable efforts to maintain educational stability for an affected child, and the Division is required to provide families with information regarding options for establishing guardianship, whether temporary or permanent, and coordinate with legal service providers, when possible.

Nothing in this bill should be construed to interfere with federal immigration authority, require any state or local agency to inquire into or report the immigration status of any individual, create a private cause of action against the state or any state agency, or alter existing mandatory reporting requirements relating to child abuse or neglect.