

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

RS24307

This bill has been proposed by the Supreme Court based on a recommendation of its Children and Families in the Courts Committee. It would make several improvements to the Child Protective Act, including the following: 1. Clarify the possible outcomes at shelter care hearings. 2. Clarify the procedure for redispotion hearings. 3. Promote educational stability for children in foster care, by requiring the Department of Health and Welfare (DHW) to report and the court to inquire about efforts to maintain foster children in the same school. 4. Address concerns about treatment of children in foster care with psychotropic drugs, by requiring DHW to report and the court to inquire when foster children are receiving treatment with psychotropic drugs. 5. Promote connections between siblings, requiring DHW to report and the court to inquire about efforts to place siblings in the same foster home, or efforts for visitation among siblings in different foster placements, unless joint placement or visitation is not in the best interest of one or more of the siblings. 6. Clarify that DHW is to prepare a transition plan for assisting the youth with the transition to successful adulthood beginning at age 14. 7. Require DHW to inform foster youth about their rights, and document that the information has been provided. 8. Providing for the court to ask the youth about the youth's desires regarding permanency. 6. Promote outcomes for foster youth 16 and older who have a permanency goal of another permanent planned living arrangement, by encouraging enrichment activities and clarifying DHW's duty to make efforts to finalize a more permanent goal for the youth. 7. Avoid disruptions in child protection cases and placement of Indian children by requiring DHW to report and the court to make findings about DHW's efforts to identify Indian children as early as possible in a child protection case. 8. Amend the definition of a protective order to clarify that protective orders are not limited to orders issued prior to an adjudicatory hearing.

FISCAL NOTE

This bill would have no direct impact on the general fund. However, several elements of this bill are required to fulfill DHW's state plan for federal IV-E funding. The funding that could otherwise be lost includes \$9,905,170 for foster care, \$7,250,579 for adoption subsidies, and \$18,540 for guardianship subsidies.

Contact:

Judge Barry Wood
(208) 334-2246