A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1   AN ACT

2   relating to the management of child protective services

3   caseworkers.

4   BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

5   SECTION 1. Section 531.048, Government Code, is amended by

6   adding Subsection (d-1) to read as follows:

7   (d-1) Notwithstanding Subsection (d), the Department of

8   Family and Protective Services shall ensure that the average

9   caseload for the following categories of department caseworkers

10 does not exceed the number specified by this subsection:

11 (1) for case management caseworkers and investigative

12 caseworkers in the child protective services division providing

13 services through conservatorship programs, an average of 24 cases

14 at any time; and

15 (2) for case management caseworkers in the child

16 protective services division providing services through foster and

17 adoption programs and family-based safety services programs, an

18 average equal to 80 percent of the average caseload that existed on

19 January 1, 2007, for those caseworkers.

20 SECTION 2. Subchapter B, Chapter 40, Human Resources Code,

21 is amended by adding Section 40.0325 to read as follows:

22 Sec. 40.0325. DEGREE REQUIREMENTS FOR CASEWORKERS. (a)

23 The department may not employ a person as a caseworker unless the

24 person holds a bachelor's degree or advanced degree in at least one

1   of the following academic areas:

2   (1)   social work;

3   (2)   counseling;

4   (3)   early childhood education;

5   (4)   psychology;

6   (5)   criminal justice; or

7   (6)   elementary or secondary education.

8   (b) Notwithstanding Subsection (a), the department may

9   employ a person as a caseworker who does not hold a degree required

10   by Subsection (a) if the person has other exceptional education or

11   experience that the department determines qualifies the person to

12   perform the functions of a caseworker.

13   SECTION 3. Section 40.0325, Human Resources Code, as added

14   by this Act, applies only to a caseworker hired by the Department of

15   Family and Protective Services on or after the effective date of

16   this Act. A caseworker hired before the effective date of this Act

17   is not required to possess the degree required by Section 40.0325,

18   Human Resources Code, as added by this Act, as long as the person

19   remains employed by the Department of Family and Protective

20   Services as a caseworker.

21   SECTION 4. The Department of Family and Protective Services

22   shall increase and maintain the salary for case management and

23   investigative caseworkers and supervisors in the child protective

24   services division providing services through conservatorship

25   programs, foster and adoption programs, and family-based safety

26   services programs so that the salary for each employee exceeds 200

27   percent of the federal poverty level.

1   SECTION 5. This Act takes effect September 1, 2007.