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et al.

H.B. No. 2225

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT
2 relating to creating a committee to review the process for finding
3 permanent placements for children in the conservatorship of the
4 state.

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

6 SECTION 1. (a) The Department of Family and Protective
7 Services, in conjunction with the adoption review committee
8 described by Subsection (b) of this section, shall conduct an
9 extensive review of the foster care system to:

10 (1) identify obstacles that impede the department's
11 ability to find a permanent placement for foster children,
12 including placement by adoption; and

13 (2) develop ways to improve the foster care system by:

14 (A) reducing the time a child is in the
15 conservatorship of the department before being permanently placed;

16 (B) reducing the number of children in the
17 conservatorship of the department who are placed outside of their
18 home county; and

19 (C) enhancing the procedures for adopting foster
20 children.

21 (b) The adoption review committee is composed of the
22 following nine members:

23 (1) four members appointed by the executive
24 commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission as

1 follows:

2 (A) an employee of the Department of Family and
3 Protective Services;

4 (B) a representative from a licensed
5 child-placing agency that provides adoption services;

6 (C) a representative from the Council on
7 Adoptable Children of Texas; and

8 (D) an attorney with expertise in handling
9 adoptions; and

10 (2) five members who have expertise in or a
11 demonstrated commitment to adoption issues, three of whom are
12 appointed by the governor, one of whom is appointed by the
13 lieutenant governor, and one of whom is appointed by the speaker of
14 the house of representatives.

15 (c) The adoption review committee shall meet at least
16 quarterly.

17 (d) Not later than December 1, 2010, the Department of
18 Family and Protective Services shall submit a written report of the
19 results of the review conducted under Subsection (a) of this
20 section to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of
21 the house of representatives, the House Committee on Human
22 Services, and the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services.
23 The report must include:

24 (1) a summary of the findings of the review conducted
25 under Subsection (a) of this section;

26 (2) a summary of the obstacles identified in the
27 review that impede the department's ability to find permanent

1 placements for foster children;

2 (3) recommendations of actions the department should
3 take to eliminate the obstacles described by Subdivision (2) of
4 this subsection; and

5 (4) any legislative recommendations that would
6 improve the foster care system.

7 SECTION 2. Not later than December 1, 2009, the executive
8 commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission and the
9 governor shall appoint the members of the adoption review committee
10 and the adoption review committee shall begin performing its duties
11 as provided by this Act.

12 SECTION 3. The adoption review committee is abolished and
13 this Act expires September 1, 2011.

14 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
15 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
16 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
17 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
18 Act takes effect September 1, 2009.