

By: Van de Putte

S.B. No. 1644

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the availability on the Internet of certain information regarding the child protective services functions of the Department of Family and Protective Services.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter B, Chapter 40, Human Resources Code, is amended by adding Section 40.03052 to read as follows:

Sec. 40.03052. PUBLIC ACCESS TO CERTAIN DEPARTMENT DATA.

(a) The commissioner shall make available to the public, through the department's Internet website, certain statistical information maintained by the department and of interest to the public regarding the child protective services program administered by the department. The department shall consult with interested stakeholders in determining the data elements to be published that shall include but not be limited to:

(1) the number and percentage of children who the department is aware:

(i) are placed with relatives by a parent as a result of:

(a) an investigation; or

(b) the parent's participation in family-based safety services when:

(1) this placement is included in the family's safety plan;

1 (2) the department does a
2 background check on the relative with whom the child is to be
3 placed; or

4 (3) the department seeks a court
5 order to require the parent to participate in family based safety
6 services.

7 (ii) are returned to foster care from a
8 relative placement due to the relative's financial hardship.

9 (b) The department shall modify current policies to ensure
10 that the data is collected in the least burdensome manner possible
11 that does not compromise the integrity and relevancy of the data.

12 (c) The system developed under this section must:

13 (1) provide information in a summarized format easily
14 understood by the public;

15 (2) allow users to search, sort, and download the
16 information.

17 (d) The information published on the department's Internet
18 website as provided by this section must:

19 (1) be updated at least quarterly;

20 (2) be organized appropriately based on subject matter
21 and easily accessible from a clearly identified location on the
22 Internet website;

23 (3) include data aggregated at both the statewide and
24 administrative region levels.

25 (e) The department shall make the information maintained
26 under this section available, other than information that is
27 required by law to be confidential.

1 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2009 for
2 department data included on the website as of that date.