

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 2655
By: Frank
Human Services
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Department of Family and Protective Services administers many different types of care within the state's foster care system. One of the goals of the relative and other designated caregiver placement program, otherwise known as kinship care, is to keep children in the system with family members. C.S.H.B. 2655 seeks to ensure that children achieve permanency in their kinship placements as quickly and efficiently as possible.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 2655 amends the Family Code to require the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to study the effectiveness of the relative and other designated caregiver placement program and make recommendations to the legislature for improving the program. The bill requires the recommended improvements to be designed to minimize the number of placements for each child, maximize efficiency in the distribution of any monetary or other assistance for which caregivers qualify, facilitate a safe and permanent exit from the managing conservatorship of DFPS in as timely a fashion as possible, and assist caregivers in obtaining the verification necessary to qualify for foster care maintenance reimbursement. The bill authorizes the recommendations to include increases in the amount of assistance and the identification of automated or other processes designed to speed the payment of assistance. The bill requires DFPS to report its findings and recommendations to the legislature not later than January 1, 2017. The bill's provisions expire September 1, 2017.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2015.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 2655 may differ from the original in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following comparison is organized and formatted in a manner that indicates the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

INTRODUCED

SECTION 1. Subchapter I, Chapter 264, Family Code, is amended by adding Section 264.761 to read as follows:

Sec. 264.761. STUDY OF PROGRAM. (a) The department shall study the effectiveness of the relative and other designated caregiver placement program created by this subchapter and make recommendations on improvements to the program. Any such improvements should be designed to minimize the number of placements for each child, maximize efficiency in distribution of any monetary or other assistance for which caregivers qualify, facilitate safe and permanent exit from the managing conservatorship of the department in as timely a fashion as possible, and prepare caregivers for verification necessary to receive for foster care maintenance reimbursement. The recommendations may include increases to the dollar amount of assistance as well as the identification of automated or other processes designed to speed the payment of assistance.

(b) The department shall report its findings and recommendations to the legislature not later than January 1, 2017.

(c) This section expires September 1, 2017.

No equivalent provision.

HOUSE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

SECTION 1. Subchapter I, Chapter 264, Family Code, is amended by adding Section 264.761 to read as follows:

Sec. 264.761. STUDY OF PROGRAM. (a) The department shall study the effectiveness of the relative and other designated caregiver placement program created by this subchapter and make recommendations to the legislature for improving the program. The recommended improvements must be designed to minimize the number of placements for each child, maximize efficiency in the distribution of any monetary or other assistance for which caregivers qualify, facilitate a safe and permanent exit from the managing conservatorship of the department in as timely a fashion as possible, and assist caregivers in obtaining the verification necessary to qualify for foster care maintenance reimbursement. The recommendations may include increases in the amount of assistance and the identification of automated or other processes designed to speed the payment of assistance.

(b) The department shall report its findings and recommendations to the legislature not later than January 1, 2017.

(c) This section expires September 1, 2017.

SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2015.