

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 135
By: West
Human Services
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) lacks a centralized record of the status of home studies for kinship families. This deficiency has delayed kinship placements, which leads to a lengthier period during which children are kept in the foster care system. There have been instances where various caseworkers in parts of Texas were not aware a home study had already been conducted. Additionally, the lack of this status tracking has caused families to miss statutory deadlines, denying parents due process during traditional removal proceedings. S.B. 135 seeks to address this issue by requiring DFPS to electronically record the status of a home study of a potential relative or designated caregiver.

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

S.B. 135 amends the Family Code to require the Department of Family and Protective Services to maintain an electronic record of the status of a home study of a potential relative or designated caregiver required to be performed before the full adversary hearing in a child protection suit. The bill applies only to a home study performed on or after the bill's effective date.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2023.