

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
88R2954 MLH-D

S.B. 135
By: West
Health & Human Services
4/3/2023
As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

This bill results from constituent casework where the disposition or tracking of a timely home study would have resulted in quicker placement for the child in care. The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) lacks centralized collection of home studies, but most especially the key dates involving these home studies, such as when the home study is due, when the home study has been received by the court, and proof that the primary caseworker has received and acknowledged the home study. This deficiency has delayed kinship placements, which leads to a lengthier period during which children are kept in the system.

S.B. 135 directs DFPS to record the results for home studies conducted in DFPS's case management system.

After working with DFPS, a committee substitute is anticipated which will simplify and clarify the obligation to collect and report home studies solely to kinship placements, and allow DFPS to document the necessary information using a more cost-effective solution than one which would require reprogramming of DFPS's existing case management system.

As proposed, S.B. 135 amends current law relating to recording the results of certain home studies performed by the Department of Family and Protective Services.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 262.114, Family Code, by adding Subsection (a-3) to require the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to record the results of a home study performed under Subsection (a) (relating to requiring DFPS to perform an evaluation of a potential relative or designated caregiver) in DFPS's electronic case management system.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 264.207, Family Code, by adding Subsection (b) to require DFPS to record the results of a home study performed under Subsection (a) (relating to requiring DFPS to complete a home study before the date an applicant is approved for adoption) in DFPS's electronic case management system.

SECTION 3. Makes application of this Act prospective.

SECTION 4. Effective date: September 1, 2023.