

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 500
By: Sparks
Human Services
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Currently, prospective adoptive parents must review a child's health, social, educational, and genetic history (HSEGH) report before adoption can proceed. The bill sponsor has informed the committee, however, that delays in providing these records have contributed to longer waiting times for adoption and higher costs to the state. S.B. 500 seeks to address these issues by setting specific deadlines for the provision of these records and reducing the amount of information that needs to be redacted.

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. 500 amends the Family Code to revise provisions relating to access to certain information in the adoption process as follows:

- clarifies the duty of the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), a licensed child-placing agency, or a parent or guardian to distribute the required report on the available health, social, educational, and genetic history of the child to be adopted before placing the child for adoption;
- imposes a deadline by which DFPS is required to ensure that each licensed child-placing agency, single source continuum contractor, or other person placing a child for adoption receives a copy of any portion of that report prepared by DFPS of not later than the 45th day after the latter of the date the child's primary permanency plan goal is changed to adoption or the date the court renders an order terminating parental rights with regard to the child;
- specifies that the records and information relating to a child's history that the prospective adoptive parents of the child are entitled to examine include confidential information other than the identity of the biological parents and any other person whose identity is confidential;
- requires DFPS, the licensed child-placing agency, or the other person placing the child for adoption to redact each social security number from such records and information;
- includes any biological siblings adopted by a different family, the adoptive parents of those biological siblings, and any person who made a report of abuse or neglect to DFPS or a law enforcement agency among the persons whose identity DFPS, the licensed child-placing agency, or the other person placing the child for adoption is required to protect in editing such records and information;

- specifies that the other persons whose confidential identities such entities are required to ensure to protect in editing such records and information are any persons whose identities are confidential under statutory provisions relating to the confidentiality of a person who voluntarily delivers an abandoned child to a designated emergency infant care provider;
- requires DFPS, the licensed child-placing agency, or the other person placing the child for adoption to provide such records and information not later than the 90th day after the date the information is requested; and
- requires a prospective adoptive parent to sign a nondisclosure agreement before DFPS, the licensed child-placing agency, or the other person placing the child for adoption may release confidential information under provisions relating to access to information in the adoption process.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2025.