

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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C.S.S.B. 500
By: Sparks
Health & Human Services
4/15/2025
Committee Report (Substituted)

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

S.B. 500 seeks to decrease waiting periods for adopted children from the foster care children by establishing timelines for mandated record reviews.

Under current law, prospective adoptive parents must review a child's health, social, educational, and genetic history (HSEGH) report before adoption can proceed. However, delays in providing these records have contributed to longer waiting times for adoption. In 2024, a Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) follow-up report revealed that it takes an average of 52-55 days to process these records, with some cases extending over six months. This legislation builds on the foundation laid by S.B. 2009 in the 88th Legislature, which sought to streamline the process by mandating that HSEGH reports be compiled and distributed within 30 days of any change in the adoption plan. S.B. 500 amends the Family Code to set specific deadlines for the provision of these records and reduces the amount of information that needs to be redacted, ensuring that children move out of the foster care system more quickly and the state incurs fewer costs related to foster care.

According to a DFPS follow-up request from July 2024, there is a 45-business day (60 calendar day) time frame from the "date a request for redaction services for the purpose of adoption is received". DFPS says it takes an average of 52-55 days to process over the last three fiscal years. However, according to public testimony by HollyAnn Petree of Addy's Hope Adoption Agency, "In the last 18 months, we've had at least six cases where the redacted file has taken over six months to be returned to us after one of our families has been selected...."

S.B. 500 amends the Family Code to establish clear deadlines for CPS to provide required records to prospective parents and eliminating the amount of information needed to be redacted from a child's case file would shorten the amount of time children spend in the foster care system and decrease the amount of money spent by the state on foster care.

Committee Substitute:

The committee substitute changes the timeline for DFPS to provide HSEGH reports to parents from 30 days to 45 days. Additionally, the substitute clarifies that the agency must provide these reports when the child's primary permanency plan goal is changed to adoption.

C.S.S.B. 500 amends current law relating to access to certain information in the adoption process.

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 Sections 162.005(b) and (c), Family Code, as follows:

- (b) Requires the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), a licensed child-placing agency, or a child's parent or guardian, before placing the child for adoption, to

compile a report on the available health, social, educational, and genetic history of the child to be adopted and distribute the report as required by Chapter 162 (Adoption).

(c) Requires DFPS 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 the report prepared by DFPS not later than the 45th day after the latter of the date the child's primary permanency plan goal is changed to include adoption or the date the court renders an order terminating parental rights with regard to the child.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 162.0062, Family Code, by amending Subsection (a) and adding Subsections (a-2) and (a-3), as follows:

(a) Entitles the prospective adoptive parents of a child, except as provided by Subsection (c) (relating to DFPS's authority to provide records and certain other information relating to the history of the child to the prospective adoptive parents after they review the child's history report), to examine the records and other information relating to the history of the child, including 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 other person placing the child for adoption to:

(1) redact each social security number from the records and information; and

(2) edit the records and information to protect the identity of the biological parents, any biological siblings adopted by a different family, the adoptive parents of those biological siblings, any person who made a report of abuse or neglect to DFPS or a law enforcement agency, and any person whose identity is confidential under Section 262.308 (Confidentiality). Makes a nonsubstantive change.

(a-2) Requires a prospective adoptive parent to sign a nondisclosure agreement before DFPS, the licensed child-placing agency, or other person placing the child for adoption is authorized to release confidential information under Section 162.0062 (Access to Information).

(a-3) Requires DFPS, the licensed child-placing agency, or other person placing the child for adoption to provide the information under this section not later than the 90th day after the date the information is requested.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2025.