
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO CHILD WELFARE SERVICES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the child welfare
2 services branch of the department of human services is facing
3 scrutiny over the branch's operations, including policies,
4 procedures, and management. In a 2017 review conducted by the
5 United States Administration for Children and Families, the
6 child welfare services branch was found to have made no
7 improvements from the previous evaluation conducted in 2009.
8 The review further stated that the child welfare services branch
9 only met five of the seven systematic factor categories, which
10 were identical to the results in the 2009 evaluation.

11 The legislature further finds that there are other concerns
12 about the child welfare services branch, including vacant
13 positions within the agency, insufficient quality and frequency
14 of caseworker visits, children remaining in foster care beyond
15 fifteen months with no viable goal, and maltreatment allegations
16 in pending cases not being formally investigated. Addressing
17 these concerns will help the branch in effectively carrying out



1 its mission to ensure the safety and permanency of children in
2 their own homes or, when necessary, in out-of-home placements.

3 The purpose of this Act is to establish a child welfare
4 services task force to review the child welfare services branch
5 and examine best practices that will help to improve child care
6 safety through the branch.

7 SECTION 2. (a) The department of human services shall
8 establish a child welfare services task force to review the
9 child welfare services branch and examine best practices that
10 will help to improve child care safety through the branch. If a
11 task force which addresses the child welfare services branch
12 currently exists, the department shall combine the two task
13 forces and their purposes together.

14 (b) The following individuals shall serve as members of
15 the task force:

16 (1) The director of human services or the director's
17 designee, who shall serve as chair of the task force;

18 (2) The administrator of the child welfare services branch
19 or the administrator's designee;



1 (3) A representative from the child care licensing program
2 designated by the administrator of the benefit,
3 employment and support services division;

4 (4) A representative from the department of the attorney
5 general, to be designated by the attorney general;

6 (5) A representative from each of the county police
7 departments in the State; and

8 (6) A representative from the United States Department of
9 Defense Family Advocacy program.

10 (c) Task force members shall recommend additional members
11 from the following stakeholder groups:

12 (1) Current or former foster youth;

13 (2) Resource caregivers;

14 (3) Biological parents of current or former foster youths;
15 and

16 (4) Frontline child welfare services branch social
17 workers.

18 Task force members may recommend additional members with
19 appropriate specialized expertise to the task force, to be
20 approved by the chairperson.



- 1 (d) In carrying out its duties, the task force shall:
- 2 (1) Request input from child welfare services branch
- 3 workers for changes in the workplace, including
- 4 systems changes, overtime, leadership training, and
- 5 the establishment of an advisory committee where staff
- 6 can interact with the administration of the branch;
- 7 (2) Seek more state matching funds to secure a greater
- 8 amount of federal funding for improved training,
- 9 worker recruitment and retention, additional positions
- 10 within the child welfare services branch, assistance
- 11 for family court working with the branch, ample
- 12 opportunities to secure advanced degrees in the field
- 13 of social work for branch workers, and support for the
- 14 electronic system of the branch;
- 15 (3) Determine methods to improve worker recruitment and
- 16 retention, including the hiring of university students
- 17 in the school of social work and offering loan
- 18 repayments; and
- 19 (4) Evaluate the child welfare services branch's
- 20 investigations of child abuse and look at areas that



1 are in need of improvement that will allow for the
2 timely completion of future investigations.

3 (e) The task force shall submit a report of its findings
4 and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the
5 legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
6 the regular session of 2020.

7 (f) The task force shall cease to exist on June 30, 2020.

8 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on January 1, 2059.



Report Title:

Child Welfare Services; Task Force

Description:

Establishes or merges with an existing task force a Child Welfare Services Task Force to review the Child Welfare Services Branch and examine best practices that will help to improve child care safety through the Branch. (HB383 HD1)

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