
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 Department of Health and Human Services
6 Administration for Children and Families, the child welfare
7 services branch was found to have made no improvements from the
8 previous evaluation conducted in 2009. The review further
9 stated that the child welfare services branch only met five of
10 the seven systematic factor categories, which were identical to
11 the results in the 2009 evaluation.

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



1 these concerns will help the branch in effectively carrying out
2 its mission to ensure the safety and permanency of children in
3 their own homes or, when necessary, in out-of-home placements.

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

8 SECTION 2. (a) There is established within the department
9 of human services for administrative purposes a child welfare
10 services task force to review the child welfare services branch
11 and examine best practices that will help improve child care
12 safety through the branch.

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

- 15 (1) The director of human services or the director's
16 designee, who shall serve as chair of the task force;
- 17 (2) The administrator of the child welfare services branch
18 or the administrator's designee;
- 19 (3) A representative from the child care program
20 designated by the administrator of the benefit,
21 employment and support services division;



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

3 (5) A representative from each of the county police
4 departments in the State;

5 (6) A current or former foster youth, to be appointed by
6 the department of human services;

7 (7) A resource caregiver, to be appointed by the
8 department of human services;

9 (8) A biological parent of a current or former foster
10 youth, to be appointed by the department of human
11 services; and

12 (9) A frontline child welfare services social worker, to
13 be appointed by the department of human services.

14 The department of human services shall invite a representative
15 from the United States Department of Defense Family Advocacy
16 program to serve on the task force. The department of human
17 services may appoint additional members to the task force. The
18 task force members may recommend additional members with
19 appropriate specialized expertise to the task force, to be
20 approved by the chairperson.

21 (c) In carrying out its duties, the task force shall:



- 1 (1) Request input from child welfare services branch
2 workers for changes in the workplace, including
3 systems changes, overtime, leadership training, and
4 the establishment of an advisory committee where staff
5 can interact with the administration of the branch;
- 6 (2) Seek:
- 7 (A) More state matching funds to secure a greater
8 amount of federal funding for improved training,
9 worker recruitment and retention;
- 10 (B) Additional positions within the child welfare
11 services branch;
- 12 (C) Assistance for family court working with the
13 branch;
- 14 (D) Ample opportunities to secure advance degrees in
15 the field of social work for branch workers; and
- 16 (E) Support for the electronic system of the branch;
- 17 (3) Determine methods to improve worker recruitment and
18 retention, including the hiring of university students
19 in the school of social work and offering loan
20 repayments; and



1 (4) Evaluate the child welfare services branch's
2 investigations of child abuse and propose improvements
3 that will allow for the timely completion of future
4 investigations.

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

9 (e) The task force shall cease to exist on June 30, 2020.

10 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2050.



Report Title:

DHS; Child Welfare Services; Task Force

Description:

Establishes a Child Welfare Services Task Force to review the Child Welfare Services Branch of the Department of Human Services and examine best practices that will help to improve child care safety through the Branch. Requires report to Legislature. Effective 7/1/2050. (SD2)

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