

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



## REPRESENTATIVE LES GARA

### Sectional Analysis to CSSSHB 27(JUD) Version G

**Section 1** This Act may be known as the Child Protection and Opportunity Act.

**Section 2** formally adds recruiting foster parents when there is a shortage of foster parents to the duties of the Department of Health and Social Services (“the department”).

**Section 3** amends AS 47.10.080(*l*) to require the department to demonstrate in existing hearings that the department is making reasonable efforts to find a permanent placement for a child.

**Section 4** requires that during status hearings the department demonstrate that it is taking reasonable efforts to find a permanent home for a child.

**Section 5** requires that when the department transfers a child from one out-of-home placement to another, the department shall search for an appropriate placement, if in the child’s best interests, with an adult family member or a family friends who meets the foster care licensing requirements established by the department.

**Section 6** requires that when a child is transferred from one placement setting to another, and it is reasonable and in the child’s best educational interests, the department shall coordinate with the school the child is attending to ensure the child is permitted to remain in that school through the end of the school term if the child’s new placement is in the same municipality and connected by road to the school. Where the Department does a Team Decision Meeting involving a new home placement for a child, the participants must be invited to offer input on whether a school change is or is not in the child’s best interests.

**Section 7** amends AS 47.10.142 by adding a new subsection requiring that when the department takes emergency custody of a child, the department shall, to the extent feasible and consistent with the best interests of the child, place the child according to the criteria specified under AS 47.14.100(e).

**Section 8** amends AS 47.14.100(a) to allow the department to authorize a transitional living arrangement, including a student dorm at a postsecondary educational institution, in order to adequately meet the child’s needs and assists the child in transitioning to independent living.

**Section 9** changes the age when the department is no longer required to continue searching for a suitable adoptive or permanent legal guardianship for a child from 18 to 21 years of age.

**Section 10** requires that before a child is released from the Office of Children’s Services custody before age 21 the department demonstrate at the court proceeding that releasing the child out of care is in the youth’s best interests.

**Section 11** amends AS 47.18.320(a) to state that the Office of Children’s Services should work towards not just a “basic education”, but towards “educational and vocational training.” Word “basic” removed.

**Section 12** requires the department, if appropriations are insufficient to meet the purposes of the foster care transition program, to submit a report to the legislature advising the legislature of the extent of the insufficiency, the department’s efforts to use the funds efficiently, and the services the department cannot provide under existing appropriations.

**Section 13** identifies the section of the bill that would result in indirect amendments to the Alaska Child in Need of Aid Rules of Procedure relating to permanency hearings.