

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE LES GARA

HB 151 Brief Explanation of Changes

Several changes were made between version U of HB 151 (introduced 3/1/17) and Committee Substitute version R (introduced 3/16/17). The most recent version, version N (3/24/17), is identical to version R, which was adopted by the Health & Social Services Committee.

In section 13 of version N (section 17 of version U) the caseload provision for new workers in their first six months was amended. The 12 family caseload now applies to a worker's first six months, rather than first 12 months. According to the department, six months is the standard needed to apply for federal matching funds. The bill's intent is to match this standard

Sections 5, 11, 15, and 20 of version U were removed, since the intent of those sections was determined to be accomplished by language already in the bill.

- Section 5 repeated what was stated in section 3, regarding encouraging contact with previous out-of-home caregivers. In version N, this provision is moved from (e) to (g).
- Section 11 (version U) was determined to be already accomplished by the language in section 2 and section 12(U)/Section 9(R), regarding the extension of subsidies to age 21.
- The department recommended that Section 15 (version U) be removed, since the intent of introducing a 45-day timeline on decisions for variances was included elsewhere in the bill, and the additional language was considered unnecessary.
- Based on advice from a foster care expert, and the department, section 20 was removed, since the option for family members to request variances is already included in statute, and this language was determined to be unnecessary.

In all instances, the words "waiver" and "exemption" were removed from the U version, to use only the word "variance," which is a more accurate term, according to the department. Section 8 in version U was removed, since that intent was accomplished by the remaining variance language (which can be found in version N Sections 14 and 16).

In section 19 (version N), the timeline for implementation of the bill was updated such that hiring of staff to meet the new worker caseload requirements can occur in year two, rather than year one.

Several other minor changes were in word choice, including those listed below. All section numbers refer to version N.

- Section 4: Changed "completed" to "complied with" search requirements
- Section 6: Changed permanency "plan" to "goal"; the language "in addition to" was added, referring to foster parents
- Section 12: Changed "require" to "encourage," regarding sibling contact