

LEGAL SERVICES

DIVISION OF LEGAL AND RESEARCH SERVICES
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY
STATE OF ALASKA

(907) 465-3867 or 465-2450
FAX (907) 465-2029
Mail Stop 3101

State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182
Deliveries to: 129 6th St., Rm. 329

MEMORANDUM

April 10, 2017

SUBJECT: Sectional summary (CSHB 151(); Work Order No. 30-LS0451\I)

TO: Representative Les Gara
Attn: Laura Chartier

FROM: Kate S. Glover *KG*
Legislative Counsel

You have requested a sectional summary of the above-described bill.

As a preliminary matter, note that a sectional summary of a bill should not be considered an authoritative interpretation of the bill and the bill itself is the best statement of its contents.

Section 1 provides that the short title of the bill is the Children Deserve a Loving Home Act.

Section 2 authorizes the Department of Health and Social Services (the department) to pay a stipend to the adoptive family or guardian of an older youth in the custody of the department who is adopted or obtains a guardian after the youth's 18th birthday. The stipends are for the purpose of assisting with the cost of caring for the youth and may only be paid with state funds.

Section 3 amends legislative findings related to children to add a finding that the department should enable a child's contact with previous out-of-home caregivers if it is in the best interests of the child.

Section 4 amends requirements relating to the transfer of a child from one placement to another to require a supervisor at the department to certify in writing whether the department has conducted a search for an appropriate placement with an adult family member or family friend.

Section 5 provides that a foster parent has the right and responsibility to use a reasonable and prudent parent standard to make decisions relating to a child in foster care, and requires the department to provide foster parents with training relating to the reasonable and prudent parent standard.

Section 6 requires the department to engage a child in an out-of-home placement who is 14 years of age or older in the development or revisions of a case plan or permanency

plan for the child and allows the child to select up to two adults to participate in the development of the plan.

Section 7 amends confidentiality provisions to require a state or municipal agency or employee to disclose appropriate confidential information regarding a case to the sibling of a child who is the subject of the case if it is in the best interests of the child to maintain contact with the sibling.

Section 8 requires a supervisor at the department, when the department takes emergency custody of a child, to certify in writing whether the department has conducted a search for an appropriate placement with an adult family member or family friend.

Section 9 requires the department to search for an appropriate placement with an adult family member or friend when the child is removed from the parent's home. The section also requires a supervisor at the department to certify in writing whether the department has conducted the search.

Section 10 amends AS 14.14.100(i) to provide that when a child can remain safely at home with an adult family member or guardian who lives with the child, the child may not be placed with an out-of-home care provider.

Section 11 requires the department to provide contact information to siblings who are in separate placements if it is in the best interests of the children to maintain contact.

Section 12 requires the department to implement workload standards and a training program for department employees and to provide a report to the legislature if the department is not able to meet certain standards.

Section 13 adds a new subsection requiring the department to assist an adult family member in obtaining a foster care license, including any necessary variances, if placing the child with the adult family member is in the best interests of the child.

Section 14 requires the department, for a person who is 16 years of age or older, to provide the person, or assist the person with obtaining, the person's birth certificate, social security card, health insurance information, medical records, driver's license or identification card, and certificate of degree of Indian or Alaska Native blood, if applicable, when the person is released from state custody under AS 47.10.

Section 15 requires the department, to the extent feasible, to approve or deny a foster care home license, including a request for a variance, not more than 45 days after the date the department receives the application for a foster care home license.

Section 16 provides the Act applies to a child in the custody or under the supervision of the department under AS 47.10 on or after the effective dates of sections 1 - 16 and 18 of the Act.

Section 17 allows the department to adopt regulations necessary to implement the changes made by the Act. The regulations may not take effect until the effective date of the section of the Act implemented by the regulation.

Section 18 requires the department to implement the changes made by secs. 4 – 6, 8 – 10, and some of the changes made by sec. 12 not later than one year after the effective date of those sections. Those sections relate to searches for appropriate placements with family members, foster parent decision-making, involving children 14 or older in case plans, allowing a child to remain in the child's home with an adult family member, and training for new employees. In addition, sec. 18 requires the department to implement the changes made by secs. 3, 7, 11, the rest of the changes in sec. 12, and secs. 13 – 15 not later than three years after the effective date of those sections. Those sections relate to legislative findings, sharing case information with siblings, training and workload standards, assisting family members in obtaining foster care licenses, providing identification information to children 16 or older when released from department custody, and approval of foster care licenses within 45 days of receiving an application.

Section 19 provides that sec. 17 of the Act takes effect immediately.

If I may be of further assistance, please advise.

KSG:mlp
17-195.mlp