
**Children & Family Services
Committee**

HB 2002

Brief Description: Authorizing limited continuing foster care and support services up to age twenty-one.

Sponsors: Representatives Dickerson, Roberts, Kagi, Kenney and Santos.

<p>Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extends foster care or group care to certain youth up through 20 years of age.
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Hearing Date: February 23, 2005.

Staff: Cynthia Forland (786-7152).

Background:

Children and youth may be placed in out-of-home care as a result of abuse, neglect, abandonment, or family conflict. If and when children or youth become dependents of the state, they remain state dependents until they move to a permanent placement or until they reach 18 years of age. As of June 2003, there were nearly 8,000 children and youth who had been living in out-of-home care for at least 60 days, and of those, approximately 36 percent had been in out-of-home care for more than two years. In 2002, 470 youth "aged out" of foster care.

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), which is charged with the duty to provide child welfare services in the state, is granted the authority to:

- provide continued foster care or group care for individuals from 18 through 20 years of age to enable them to complete their high school or vocational school program; and
- provide independent living services to youths, including individuals from 18 through 20 years of age, who are or have been in foster care.

Independent living services are intended to assist youth who are or have been in foster care with the transition to independence. Services include assistance with housing, education, employment, and social services.

Summary of Bill:

The DSHS is granted authority to allow a youth reaching 18 years of age to continue in foster care or group care as needed to participate in or complete a high school or post-high school academic or vocational program, and to receive necessary support and transition services. A youth who

remains eligible for such placement and services pursuant to DSHS rules may continue in foster care or group care until the youth reaches his or her 21st birthday.

It is provided that the bill must not be construed to create:

- an entitlement to services;
- judicial authority to extend the jurisdiction of Juvenile Court under a dependency proceeding to a youth who has turned 18 years of age or to order the provision of services to the youth;
or
- a private right of action or claim on the part of any individual, entity, or agency against the DSHS or any contractor of the DSHS.

The DSHS is authorized to adopt rules establishing eligibility for independent living services and placement for youths pursuant to the bill.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 14, 2005.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.