
Ways & Means Committee

HB 2347

Brief Description: Concerning the review of support payments.

Sponsors: Representative Kagi.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Removes the requirement that the Department of Social and Health Services conduct a review of adoption support payments at least once every five years.

Hearing Date: 4/14/09

Staff: Melissa Palmer (786-7388)

Background:

The Adoption Support Program assists families adopting children who have been in out-of-home care by providing ongoing financial and medical support to qualified children based on state and federal regulations.

To qualify for adoption support through the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), the child must:

- be less than 18 years of age when DSHS and the adoptive parent have signed the Adoption Support agreement;
- be legally free (birth parents rights have been terminated);
- be residing in or likely to be placed in out-of-home care; and
- have special needs.

Adoptive parents of a child who qualifies for the Adoption Support Program are able to receive an adoption subsidy. The subsidy is a negotiated monthly cash payment provided to adoptive families to help cover some of the expenses involved in raising a child with special needs. The amount of the payment is based on the child's needs and family's circumstances, jointly

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determined through the negotiation between the family and DSHS, and must not exceed the amount the child would receive if the child were in a foster family home.

The DSHS is required to review adoption support payments at least once every five years. Additionally, an adoptive parent that receives adoption support may request at any time, in writing, a review of the amount of payment or the level of continuing payments. The review is to take place no later than thirty days from the receipt of the request. As a result of the review, the DSHS may adjust support payments based upon changes in the needs of the child, parents' income, resources and expenses.

Summary of Bill:

The requirement that the DSHS must conduct adoption support reviews every five years is removed. The adoptive parent may at any time make a written request for a review and receive a review no later than 30 days from the request.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on April 10, 2009.

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