
**Early Learning & Human Services
Committee**

HB 1774

Brief Description: Recognizing adopted siblings and adoptive parents as relatives.

Sponsors: Representatives Goodman, Pettigrew, Orwall, Kenney, Roberts, Kagi and Moscoso.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Provides that an adopted sibling or half sibling and adoptive parents of a sibling or half sibling are considered the same as a member of the birth family.

Hearing Date: 2/15/11

Staff: Linda Merelle (786-7092).

Background:

Siblings in Dependency Proceedings.

Unless there is good cause not to, the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) shall follow the wish of the natural parent regarding the placement of a child with a relative or other suitable person. Preferences such as family constellation, sibling relationships, ethnicity, and religion shall be considered when matching children to foster homes.

Siblings in Adoption Proceedings.

Where there is an agreement for the adoption of a child from foster care, the court is required by statute to encourage the adoptive parents, birth parents, foster parents, kinship caregivers, and the DSHS or other supervising agency to seriously consider the long-term benefits to the child adoptee and siblings of the child adoptee of providing for and facilitating continuing postadoption contact between siblings. To the extent feasible, and when in the best interests of

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the child who is adopted and his or her siblings, contact between the siblings should be frequent and of a similar nature as and contact before the adoption.

Birth Family.

The "birth family" is considered to be any blood relative, relatives of a half sibling, stepfather, stepmother, stepbrother, and stepsister, a person who legally adopts a child, and their spouses. A member of a birth family also includes extended family members as defined by the law or custom of a Native American child's tribe.

Summary of Bill:

Under this bill, an adopted sibling or half sibling and adoptive parents of a sibling or half sibling are included in the definition of a "relative." Persons who are included in the definition of a relative are considered the same as a member of the birth family.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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