

SENATE BILL REPORT

EHB 2335

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Ways & Means, March 13, 2014

Title: An act relating to extended foster care services.

Brief Description: Concerning extended foster care services.

Sponsors: Representatives Roberts, Parker, Kagi, Carlyle, Freeman, Goodman, Walsh, Sawyer, Senn, Zeiger, Jinkins, Muri, Reykdal and Ormsby.

Brief History: Passed House: 3/05/14, 84-13; 3/05/14, 88-10.

Committee Activity: Ways & Means: 3/13/14 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Hill, Chair; Baumgartner, Vice Chair; Honeyford, Capital Budget Chair; Hargrove, Ranking Member; Keiser, Assistant Ranking Member on the Capital Budget; Ranker, Assistant Ranking Member on the Operating Budget; Bailey, Becker, Billig, Braun, Conway, Dammeier, Fraser, Frockt, Hasegawa, Hatfield, Hewitt, Kohl-Welles, Padden, Parlette, Rivers, Schoesler and Tom.

Staff: Breann Boggs (786-7433)

Background: In 2008 the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act was signed into federal law. Among its many provisions, the Fostering Connections legislation created a pathway for states to use Title IV-E funds, or foster care funding, to extend foster care services to youth ages 19–21 if the youth engages in certain qualifying activities.

In 2011 the Legislature established the Extended Foster Care program in Washington. Currently a youth age 19–21 is eligible for extended foster care services if the youth is participating in or completing a secondary education program or a secondary education equivalency program. Extended foster care services may include, but are not limited to foster care placement or placement in a supervised independent living setting, medical or dental services, transitional living services, case management, and assistance meeting basic needs.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

In 2012 the Legislature expanded extended foster care eligibility to include youth who are enrolled, or have applied for and demonstrate intent to enroll in a postsecondary academic or postsecondary vocational program. In 2013 the Legislature again expanded qualifying activities to allow a youth to request extended foster care services if the youth has an open dependency case at age 18 and is participating in a program or activity designed to promote employment or remove barriers to employment.

The court must dismiss dependency cases of foster care youth who turn 18 years of age if they are not participating in one of the qualifying activities. Youth whose dependency cases were dismissed at age 18 or after may request extended foster care services through a Voluntary Placement Agreement (VPA) if they request services before turning 19 years of age. A youth may enter into a VPA only once but may transition among eligibility categories, so long as the youth remains eligible during the transition.

When the youth is at least 17 years of age but not older than 17 years and six months, the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) must provide the youth with written documentation explaining the availability of extended foster care services and detailing instructions about how to access those services after they reach age 18.

DSHS is relieved of any supervisory duties over a youth who is age 18 but has not requested extended foster care services. While a youth receives extended foster care services, the youth is under the care and placement authority of DSHS.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Amendments): A youth is eligible for extended foster care services if the youth engages in employment for 80 hours or more per month.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE (Recommended Amendments): Limits expenditures on the new category of extended foster care to the funding provided specifically for this purpose.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on March 1, 2015.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: None.

Persons Testifying: No one.