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**Early Learning & Human Services  
Committee**

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**HB 1735**

**Brief Description:** Concerning extended foster care services.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Orwall, Kagi, Carlyle, Gregerson, Pollet and Ormsby.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Expands eligibility for extended foster care services to include youth who are not currently able to participate in a qualifying activity due to a documented medical condition.

**Hearing Date:** 2/6/15

**Staff:** Luke Wickham (786-7146).

**Background:**

The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (Fostering Connections Act).

In October 2008 Congress passed the Fostering Connections Act. This legislation allows states to use foster care funds to provide extended foster care services to youth between the ages of 18 and 21 years old who engage in certain qualifying activities or is incapable of engaging in those activities due to a medical condition.

Extended Foster Care Services in Washington.

In 2011 the Legislature established extended foster care services, which are defined as residential and other support services that the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) is authorized to provide to foster children who have an open dependency case when they turn age 18.

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Extended foster care services include: (1) placement in licensed, relative, or otherwise approved care; (2) supervised independent living settings; (3) assistance in meeting basic needs; (4) independent living services; (5) medical assistance; and (6) counseling or treatment.

*Eligibility Criteria.*

Under the legislation enacted in 2011, a youth was eligible for extended foster care services until age 21 while he or she participated in or completed a secondary education program or a secondary education equivalency program.

In 2012 the Legislature expanded eligibility to include youth who were enrolled, or had applied for and demonstrated intent to enroll, in a postsecondary academic or postsecondary vocational program.

In 2013 the Legislature expanded eligibility to include youth participating in a program or activity designed to promote employment or remove barriers to employment.

In 2014 the Legislature expanded eligibility, effective March, 2015, to include youth engaging in employment for eighty hours or more per month.

*Court Procedure.*

When a dependent youth turns age 18, his or her parent or guardian is dismissed from the dependency proceeding. After turning age 18, the dependency court must maintain the dependency proceeding for youth who would qualify for extended foster care services. If the court maintains the dependency proceeding, the youth is eligible to receive extended foster care services, subject to the youth's continuing eligibility and agreement to participate.

**Summary of Bill:**

The eligibility for extended foster care services is expanded to include youth who are not able to engage in any of the activities that would make him or her eligible due to a documented medical condition.

Medical condition is defined to mean a physical or mental health condition as documented by any licensed health care provider.

For youth aging out of foster care, the Children's Administration must invite representatives from the Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery, the Disability Services Administration, the Economic Services Administration, and the Juvenile Justice and Rehabilitation Administration to the youth's shared planning meeting that occurs between age 17 and 17.5 that is used to develop a transition plan.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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