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**SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6229**

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**State of Washington**

**64th Legislature**

**2016 Regular Session**

**By** Senate Human Services, Mental Health & Housing (originally sponsored by Senators O'Ban, Darneille, Carlyle, and Rolfes)

READ FIRST TIME 01/27/16.

1 AN ACT Relating to streamlining foster care licensing; reenacting  
2 and amending RCW 74.15.100; and adding new sections to chapter 74.15  
3 RCW.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 74.15  
6 RCW to read as follows:

7 The legislature finds and declares that the recruitment and  
8 retention of foster care families has become a crisis that negatively  
9 impacts children in dire need of suitable foster care placements. In  
10 order to address this crisis, the state seeks to improve its ability  
11 to recruit and retain foster families. To achieve this goal, it is  
12 necessary to streamline the foster care licensing process without  
13 compromising the safeguards in place to ensure that children in  
14 foster care are placed with qualified families.

15 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 74.15  
16 RCW to read as follows:

17 In order to streamline the foster care application process for  
18 child-placing agencies, when processing a child-placing agency  
19 application the department shall:

1 (1) Accept scanned foster care parent applications that include  
2 an original signature electronically;

3 (2) Complete and return background authorization forms within  
4 thirty days, including weekends and holidays, or provide explanation  
5 to either the prospective parent, the child-placing agency, or both  
6 about why there is a delay;

7 (3) Ensure that the forms required across the state are uniform  
8 and consistent between regions;

9 (4) If related department forms change after the foster care  
10 application has been received by the department, not require the  
11 applicant to resubmit information on a substantially similar form;

12 (5) Ensure that foster care parent applications are processed in  
13 a timely manner. If the application process is not complete within  
14 ninety days of the department's receipt of the application and  
15 background clearance, and the delay is not based on missing or  
16 incomplete information from the applicant, the department shall  
17 extend the application process an additional thirty days and provide  
18 an explanation to either the prospective parent, the child-placing  
19 agency, or both about why there is a delay;

20 (6) Email the fingerprint original case agency number to a child-  
21 placing agency within five business days of receipt of the  
22 fingerprint-based background notice from the family or child-placing  
23 agency, in order to expedite a child-placing agency's ability to  
24 arrange for fingerprint appointments for foster parents and potential  
25 foster parents.

26 **Sec. 3.** RCW 74.15.100 and 2009 c 520 s 16 and 2009 c 206 s 1 are  
27 each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

28 Each agency or supervising agency shall make application for a  
29 license or renewal of license to the department on forms prescribed  
30 by the department. A licensed agency having foster-family homes under  
31 its supervision may make application for a license on behalf of any  
32 such foster-family home. Such a foster home license shall cease to be  
33 valid when the home is no longer under the supervision of that  
34 agency. Upon receipt of such application, the department shall either  
35 grant or deny a license within ninety days unless the application is  
36 for licensure as a foster-family home, in which case RCW 74.15.040  
37 and section 2 of this act shall govern. A license shall be granted if  
38 the agency meets the minimum requirements set forth in chapter 74.15  
39 RCW and RCW 74.13.031 and the departmental requirements consistent

1 herewith, except that an initial license may be issued as provided in  
2 RCW 74.15.120. Licenses provided for in chapter 74.15 RCW and RCW  
3 74.13.031 shall be issued for a period of three years. The licensee,  
4 however, shall advise the secretary of any material change in  
5 circumstances which might constitute grounds for reclassification of  
6 license as to category. The license issued under this chapter is not  
7 transferable and applies only to the licensee. The license shall be  
8 limited to a particular location which shall be stated on the  
9 license. For licensed foster-family homes having an acceptable  
10 history of child care, the license may remain in effect for thirty  
11 days after a move, except that this will apply only if the family  
12 remains intact. Licensees must notify their licensor before moving to  
13 a new location and may request a continuation of the license at the  
14 new location. At the request of the licensee, the department shall,  
15 within thirty days following a foster-family home licensee's move to  
16 a new location, amend the license to reflect the new location,  
17 provided the new location and the licensee meet minimum licensing  
18 standards.

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