
Transportation Committee

HB 1808

Brief Description: Providing support for foster youth in obtaining drivers' licenses and automobile liability insurance.

Sponsors: Representatives Clibborn, McDonald, Kagi, Caldier, Senn, Graves, Lovick, Dent, McBride, Farrell, Wylie, Slatter, Macri, Doglio, Robinson, Ortiz-Self, Ormsby, Sells, Fey, Frame, Muri, Riccelli, Springer, Jinkins, Gregerson, Stanford and Pollet.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to contract with a private nonprofit organization to work with independent living providers to provide driver's license support to foster youth.
- Mandates that the foster youth driver's license support provided include reimbursement of Department of Licensing license issuance fees, fees for a driver training education course, and motor vehicle liability insurance costs.
- Requires the nonprofit organization administering the program to report to the DSHS and the appropriate committees of the Legislature, including the transportation committees, by December 1, 2019.

Hearing Date: 2/15/17

Staff: Jennifer Harris (786-7143).

Background:

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) was established in 1970 and consists of seven program area administrations: the Aging and Long-Term Support Administration, Behavioral Health Administration, Children's Administration, Developmental Disabilities Administration, Economic Services Administration, Financial Services Administration, and the Rehabilitation Administration. The Children's Administration responds to allegations of abuse and neglect, offers child welfare services to families, and licenses foster homes, among other responsibilities.

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.

A child is considered "dependent" or part of the child welfare system and may remain in foster care until the age of 18. The DSHS foster care services include: (1) determination of needs of the child; (2) determination of need for foster care; (3) placement of the child in the type of foster care setting that best meets the child's needs; (4) referral of a child to a private child placement agency or institution to meet the child's specific needs; (5) medical services according to the rules of the DSHS's medical program; (6) reimbursement for the care of a child in a licensed family foster home; (7) purchase of care from a licensed private child-placing agency, behavioral rehabilitation services provider, or maternity home; (8) supervision of the foster care placement by direct supervision through departmental social work services, or indirect supervision through evaluation of periodic reports from private child-placing agencies, rehabilitation services providers, or maternity homes with which the DSHS has contractual arrangements.

The DSHS provides licensed foster parents with a monthly foster care maintenance payment to assist licensed foster parents in meeting the needs of their foster child. A basic rate payment is paid to foster parents to help cover the cost of food, clothing, shelter, and personal incidentals.

The DSHS also operates the extended foster care program, which allows individuals who are dependent in foster care at age 18 to receive services if they are: (1) enrolled in a secondary education or equivalent program; (2) enrolled and participating in a postsecondary academic or postsecondary vocational program, or have applied for and can demonstrate an intention to timely enroll in a postsecondary academic or vocational program; (3) participating in a program or activity designed to promote employment or remove barriers to employment; (4) engaged in employment for 80 or more hours per month; or (5) not able to engage in the above activities due to a documented medical condition.

For eligible youth that choose to participate in the extended foster care program after they turn 18 years old, the dependency court action will continue. Eligible youth may also choose to participate in extended foster care after they turn 18 years old and until they turn 19 years old through a voluntary placement agreement with the DSHS. The services youth may receive through the extended foster care program include foster care placement or supervised independent living setting placement, medical (including mental health), dental, independent living skills training, case management through the DSHS, and referrals to community resources.

The Department of Licensing (DOL) requires individuals under the age of 18 to obtain an instruction permit and to complete a driver training education course to be eligible to obtain an intermediate driver's license. This requirement does not apply to individuals age 18 or older. The fee for a learner's permit is \$25. Fees for a new intermediate or standard driver's license total \$89. Private driver training schools and some high schools offer driver training education courses. The cost of a driver training education course and the knowledge and driving tests varies by provider. Motor vehicle liability insurance rates also vary.

Summary of Bill:

Subject to the availability of funds appropriated for the purpose, the DSHS is required to contract with a private nonprofit organization to work collaboratively with independent living providers and the DSHS to provide driver's license support to foster youth. The organization will be selected through a competitive application process. Support in navigating the driver's license

process must be provided to foster youth between 15 and 21 years old. That support must include: (1) reimbursement of fees necessary for a foster youth to obtain a driver's instruction permit, an intermediate license, and a standard or enhanced driver's license, including any required examination fees; (2) reimbursement of fees for a driver training education course if the foster youth is under the age of 18; and (3) reimbursement of the increase in motor vehicle liability insurance costs to the foster parents, relative placements, or other foster placements who add a foster youth to their motor vehicle liability insurance policy.

The nonprofit organization selected must submit a report to the DSHS and the appropriate committees of the Legislature, including the transportation committees by December 1, 2019, that documents the number of foster youth served by the program, the average cost per youth served, and recommendations for future policy, statutory, or funding changes necessary to improve the effectiveness of the program.

For the purposes of funding this program, \$800,000, or as much as is necessary within that amount, is appropriated to the DSHS for the 2017-2019 fiscal biennium from the Highway Safety Fund.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 7, 2017.

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