
Early Learning & Human Services Committee

HB 1867

Brief Description: Improving transitions in extended foster care to increase housing stability for foster youth.

Sponsors: Representatives Fey, Stambaugh, Senn, Kagi, Kilduff, Appleton, Graves, Hudgins, Orwall, Ryu, Sells, Stanford, Robinson, McDonald, Ortiz-Self, Doglio, Slatter, Tharinger and Ormsby.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows eligible youth to unenroll and reenroll in the extended foster care program an unlimited number of times between ages 18 and 21.
- Requires the Washington State Institute for Public Policy to conduct a study related to extended foster care and issue a preliminary report by December 1, 2018, and a final report by December 1, 2019.

Hearing Date: 2/14/17

Staff: Luke Wickham (786-7146).

Background:

Extended Foster Care Program.

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) operates the extended foster care program which allows individuals who are dependent in foster care at age 18 to receive services if that youth is:

- enrolled in a secondary education program or equivalent program;
- enrolled and participating in a postsecondary academic or postsecondary vocational program, or has applied for and can demonstrate an intention to timely enroll in a postsecondary academic or vocational program;

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- participating in a program or activity designed to promote employment or remove barriers to employment;
- engaged in employment for 80 or more hours per month; or
- 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 on his or her 18th birthday, the dependency court action will continue. Eligible youth may choose to participate in the extended foster care after his or her 18th birthday and until the youth turns 19 through a voluntary placement agreement with DSHS.

The services that 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;
- case management through the DSHS; and
- referrals to community resources.

In October 2016 there were 569 youth receiving extended foster care services.

Summary of Bill:

The DSHS must allow youth who have received extended foster care services to reenter the program through a voluntary placement agreement when he or she meets the criteria again. Individuals who are eligible for extended foster care services may unenroll and reenroll in extended foster care an unlimited number of times between ages 18 and 21.

The Washington Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) shall conduct a study measuring the outcomes for youth who have received extended foster care services. The study shall include: (1) measurements of any savings; (2) an outcome comparison for youth who have received extended foster care and those who aged out of foster care; and (3) a comparison of other state extended foster care programs. The WSIPP shall issue a report containing its preliminary findings to the Legislature by December 1, 2018, and a final report by December 1, 2019.

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.