

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1808

As of March 27, 2017

Title: An act relating to providing support for foster youth in obtaining drivers' licenses and automobile liability insurance.

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

Sponsors: House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by 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 History: Passed House: 3/02/17, 95-3.

Committee Activity: Transportation: 3/27/17.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates a program through a contract with the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and a private nonprofit organization to reimburse foster youth and foster parents for the costs incurred in the procurement of the foster youth's driver's license.
- Requires the nonprofit organization administering the program to report to the DSHS and the appropriate committees of the Legislature, including the House of Representatives and the Senate Transportation committees, by December 1, 2019.
- Directs that specific funding must be provided in the 2017-2019 Transportation Budget for this act to take effect.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Kellee Keegan (786-7429)

Background: DSHS and foster youth.

The DSHS's Children's Administration agency responds to allegations of abuse and neglect, offers child welfare services to families, and licenses foster homes, among other

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responsibilities. 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 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.

Department of Licensing

The 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, with a funding preference given to reimbursement of motor vehicle liability insurance costs for foster youth who practice safe driving and avoid moving violations and at-fault collisions.

The nonprofit organization selected must submit a report to the DSHS and the appropriate committees of the Legislature, including the House of Representatives and the Senate Transportation committees by December 1, 2019, that documents the number of foster youth served by the program; the average cost per youth served; negative outcomes of the program reported by foster youth, including a foster parent's inappropriate use of a foster youth's ability to drive; and recommendations for future policy, statutory, or funding changes necessary to improve the effectiveness of the program.

For this act to take effect, specific funding must be provided for it in the 2017-2019 Transportation Budget.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: As a previous foster parent, I recognize the need of a foster child to be mobile and get a license in order to be independent. Florida has a program similar to what is provided in this bill. This would offer funding for driver training and reimbursement to foster families for costs associated with insuring and getting a driver's license for a foster child. This is a safety measure, and that is why it is being funded through the highway safety fund. The Mockingbird Organization has identified that it is nearly impossible for foster youth to get a driver's license. A survey through Mockingbird, only 11 percent of the youth get a license before 18 years of age. Many foster parents are unable to afford getting their child a license. While in foster care, I was moved around many times and my foster parents didn't have the funds to help me get a driver's license; it was a rite of passage that I was not able to have and this bill would allow for some to have that opportunity. Last month, I was offered a job to support foster youth but it required the ability to drive a car but I couldn't take it because I did not have a license or a car. When I aged out of foster care, all I had was the clothes on my back. Regardless, I pulled together funds to buy a car. Shortly thereafter, I was in an accident as I had not taken driver's education and did not recognize a traffic sign. This could've been prevented if I had had the right training. This bill would bridge the gap to independence. Young people in foster care confront many barriers. These youth move frequently. Twenty-one other states cover some to all of the costs for foster youth to get licenses. It is not just the cost that presents barriers. Having an organization to assist these youth is important as well. A driver's license is an important step in being able to thrive as a functioning member of society.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Judy Clibborn, Prime Sponsor; Karolynn Tom, The Mockingbird Society; Briana Winslow, The Mockingbird Society; Tatyana Barron, Mockingbird Society; Zack Zibrosky, The Mockingbird Society.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.