

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1561

As Passed House:
March 4, 2019

Title: An act relating to ensuring participation on the oversight board for children, youth, and families by current or former foster youth, individuals with current or previous experience in the juvenile justice system, a physician with experience working with children or youth, and individuals residing east of the Cascade mountain range.

Brief Description: Ensuring participation on the oversight board for children, youth, and families by current or former foster youth, individuals with current or previous experience in the juvenile justice system, a physician with experience working with children or youth, and individuals residing east of the Cascade mountain range.

Sponsors: Representatives Dent, Senn, Appleton, Doglio, Tharinger, Slatter, Ormsby, Frame and Leavitt.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Human Services & Early Learning: 2/5/19, 2/6/19 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/4/19, 96-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Adds three members to the Oversight Board for the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (Oversight Board).
- Requires that at least five members of the Oversight Board reside in Eastern Washington.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & EARLY LEARNING

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Senn, Chair; Callan, Vice Chair; Frame, Vice Chair; Dent, Ranking Minority Member; Eslick, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; McCaslin, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Corry, Goodman, Griffey, Kilduff, Klippert, Lovick and Ortiz-Self.

Staff: Luke Wickham (786-7146).

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.

Background:

Department of Children, Youth, and Families.

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) was created in 2017. In 2018 the DCYF assumed responsibility over child welfare and early learning functions previously held by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and the Department of Early Learning. On July 1, 2019, the DCYF assumes responsibility over juvenile justice programs currently administered by the DSHS.

Oversight Board.

The Oversight Board for the DCYF (Oversight Board) was created in 2017, along with the creation of the DCYF. The Oversight Board held its first meetings in 2018.

The Oversight Board receives quarterly updates regarding the implementation of the DCYF until July 1, 2019.

The Oversight Board is authorized for the purpose of monitoring and ensuring that the DCYF achieves certain outcomes and complies with policies and rules.

The Oversight Board has powers to:

- receive reports of the Office of the Family and Children's Ombuds (OFCO);
- obtain access to relevant records in the possession of the OFCO;
- select its officers and adoption of rules for orderly procedure;
- request investigations by the OFCO of administrative acts;
- request and receive information, outcome data, documents, materials, and records from the DCYF relating to children and family welfare, juvenile rehabilitation, juvenile justice, and early learning;
- determine whether the DCYF is achieving the performance measures;
- review whether DCYF licensors appropriately and consistently applied agency rules in child care facility licensing compliance agreements; and
- conduct annual reviews of a sample of DCYF contracts for services from a variety of program and service areas to ensure that those contracts are performance-based.

The Oversight Board consists of 18 members to include:

- two Senators and two Members of the House of Representatives from the Legislature, with one member from each major caucus;
- one nonvoting representative from the Office of the Governor;
- one subject matter expert in early learning;
- one subject matter expert in child welfare;
- one subject matter expert in juvenile rehabilitation and justice;
- one subject matter expert in reducing disparities in child outcomes by family income, race, and ethnicity;
- one tribal representative from west of the crest of the Cascade mountains;
- one tribal representative from east of the crest of the Cascade mountains;
- one current or former foster parent representative;
- one representative of an organization that advocates for the best interest of the child;
- one parent stakeholder group representative;
- one law enforcement representative;

- one child welfare caseworker representative;
- one early childhood learning program implementation practitioner; and
- one judicial representative presiding over child welfare court proceedings or other children's matters.

Nonlegislative members of the board are nominated by the Governor, subject to approval of the appointed legislators and serve four-year terms.

The Oversight Board must convene at least two stakeholder meetings per year regarding contracting with the DCYF. The Oversight Board must also review surveys of providers, customers, parent groups, and external services to assess whether the DCYF is effectively delivering services.

Summary of Bill:

The membership of the Oversight Board is expanded to include:

- one current or former foster youth under age 25;
- one individual under age 25 with current or previous experience with the juvenile justice system; and
- one physician with experience working with children or youth.

When nominating and approving members of the Oversight Board, the Governor and appointed legislators must ensure that at least five of the Oversight Board members reside east of the Cascade Mountain range.

The bill also makes technical changes.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) It is important to have equal representation on the Oversight Board from east and west sides of the state; geographic representation is very important on the Oversight Board. There is nothing more important than individuals with experience in the foster care and juvenile justice systems participating on the Oversight Board.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Dent, prime sponsor; Orion Olsen, The Mockingbird Society; and Laurie Lippold, Partners for Our Children.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.